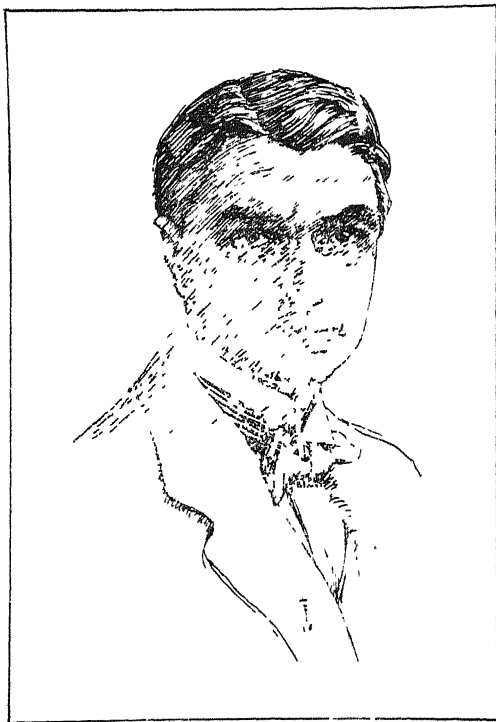


The Teaching of English Series

TEN MODERN PLAYS

No. 144



JOHN DRINKWATER

*From a pen drawing by E. Heber Thompson*

# TEN MODERN PLAYS

Edited by  
JOHN HAMPDEN M.A.

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## CONTENTS

THIRTY MINUTES IN A STREET. <i>Beatrice Mayor.</i>	9
THE HOUSE WITH THE TWISTY WINDOWS. <i>Mary Pakington</i> . . . . .	33
COLOMBINE. <i>Reginald Arkell</i> . . . . .	65
MOONSHINE. <i>Arthur Hopkins</i> . . . . .	87 ✓
THE NEW WING AT ELSINORE. <i>St. John Hankin</i> .	101
MRS. ADIS. <i>Sheila Kaye-Smith and John Hampden</i>	111
TICKLESS TIME. <i>Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook</i> . . . . .	121
X = 0: A NIGHT OF THE TROJAN WAR. <i>John Drinkwater</i> . . . . .	145
ELIZABETH REFUSES. <i>Margaret Macnamara</i> .	157
BROTHER WOLF. <i>Laurence Housman</i> . . . .	179
COMMENTARY :	
ON THE PLAYS AND THE AUTHORS . . . .	197
ON DRAMA IN GENERAL . . . . .	216
A READING LIST OF MODERN DRAMA . .	221
ACTING NOTES . . . . .	225
APPENDIX—STORIES FOR DRAMATIZATION :	
THE ENGLISHMAN. <i>John Buchan</i> . . . .	251
DOTHEBOYS HALL. <i>Charles Dickens</i> . .	257

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*By the same Editor*

BALLADS AND BALLAD-PLAYS

SIX MODERN PLAYS

SEVEN MODERN PLAYS

EIGHT MODERN PLAYS

NINE MODERN PLAYS

TEN MODERN PLAYS

THREE MODERN PLAYS AND A MIME

FOUR MODERN PLAYS

# TEN MODERN PLAYS

## PREFACE

THOUGH the one-act play is still the Cinderella of the professional theatre, from the welcome given to the previous volumes in this series, *Nine Modern Plays* and *Eight Modern Plays*, it is very plain that amateur dramatic societies, reading circles and schools have recognized its appeal. To this audience the present collection is dedicated. It offers the same variety as its predecessors, and contains a number of plays by younger writers, including a considerable and perhaps significant proportion of women dramatists.

In compliance with several requests the reading list of modern drama has been considerably extended. The exercises and acting notes have been continued, in the hope that they will be cheerfully ignored by those who do not need them, and for the benefit of schools two stories for dramatization have been included. Many teachers of English have already found that dramatization can be made to provide a strong stimulus to careful thought and expression, but the provision of raw material is sometimes difficult. It is hoped that the Appendix to this volume will remove this difficulty and so make possible many happy experiments.

The editor wishes to express his thanks to the following authors and publishers for permission to include their plays in this book :

Mrs. Beatrice Mayor and Mr. Basil Blackwell for *Thirty Minutes in a Street*; the Honourable Mary Pakington and Mr. Blackwell for *The House with the Twisty Windows*; Mr. Reginald Arkell and Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson for *Colombine*; Mr. Arthur Hopkins and Messrs. Samuel French for *Moonshine*; Messrs. Martin

Secker for *The New Wing at Elsinore*; Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith for *Mrs. Adis*; Miss Susan Glaspell and Messrs. Ernest Benn for *Tickless Time*; Mr. John Drinkwater and Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson for *X = 0*; Miss Margaret Macnamara and Messrs. Joseph Williams for *Elizabeth Refuses*; Mr. Laurence Housman and Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson for *Brother Wolf*; and Mr. John Buchan and Messrs. Nelson and Sons, Ltd., for *The Englishman* from "*The Path of the King*."

The preparation of this volume has once more increased the editor's indebtedness to Dr. Richard Wilson, to the lending library of the British Drama League, and to his wife.

J. H.

# THIRTY MINUTES IN A STREET

BY BEATRICE MAYOR

## CHARACTERS

A STRAY MAN.	A HOSTESS
A MAN WITH A BAG.	A PROFESSOR.
A RICH LADY.	A STUDENT.
A CURATE.	FIRST SHOP GIRL.
AN ACTOR.	SECOND SHOP GIRL.
A FRENCHWOMAN.	AN OLD LADY.
A CHILD.	AN ELDERLY GENTLEMAN.
FIRST CHARWOMAN.	A MUSICIAN.
SECOND CHARWOMAN.	A HUSBAND.
A GIRL.	FIRST SERVANT.
A VISITOR.	SECOND SERVANT.
A YOUNG MAN	

*Note.*—If the Cast should be considered too long for acting purposes, some or all of the following characters can be omitted: The Visitor, The Hostess, The Professor, The Student, First Shop Girl, First and Second Servants. And, in any case, the parts of the Man with the Bag, the Frenchwoman, the Husband, and the Servants can be doubled with other parts. If the Cast should be reduced, the author would be pleased to indicate the very slight alterations in the text that would then be necessary.

This play was first presented by the Playwright's Theatre at the Kingsway Theatre, on April 2, 1922.

## THIRTY MINUTES IN A STREET

SCENE.—*A street. At back, three front doors, numbered on the fanlights from right to left 183, 185, and 187. Notice on No. 183: "No Hawkers." Right, forward, a letter-box. Time: Afternoon. Early June.*

*[Enter from right a Stray Man, short, shabby, elderly, tired, slow. Carries an envelope in his hand. He is looking up at houses, when enters from right, very quickly, a Man with a Bag, carrying also golf clubs and overcoat.]*

*Stray Man.* Excuse me, sir, can you tell me——

*Man with Bag [disappearing left].* Catch a train.

*[Stray Man takes a few steps on.]*

*[Enter from right a Rich Lady. Magnificently dressed. Pair of long white kid gloves, one on, one off. Slips some letters into box, exhibiting, as she does so, an arm glistening with jewelled bracelets. Fingers covered with rings. Passes on.]*

*Stray Man.* Excuse me, madam, can you——

*Rich Lady [without turning her head. Buttoning her glove].* I haven't a penny. Not a penny.

*[Passes out.]*

*[Stray Man steps on a little. Enter from left a Curate. Slim, serious, pleasant. He is sorting some small yellow leaflets.]*

*Stray Man.* Excuse me, sir, can you tell me if——

*Curate [having already passed, but turning and smiling].* I'm a stranger. But would you like one of these? *[Gives him a yellow leaflet. Curate passes out]*

*right, still smiling. Stray Man holds leaflet close to his eyes. Reads title as though with difficulty. Drops leaflet]*

*Stray Man. You're an idiot. [Rings bell at left door. Actor wrapped in bath towel puts his head out of the window above.] Excuse me, sir——*

*Actor. Can't come down. Having a bath.*

*[Disappears.]*

*[Enter, left, a young Frenchwoman.]*

*Stray Man. Excuse me, miss——*

*Frenchwoman [having already passed, but turning and smiling graciously]. Pardon, Monsieur. Je suis française.*

*[Enter, left, a Child, little girl, on a much used scooter.*

*Dirty, but serene, self-assured little face. An old rag doll sits up, tied to the handle-bar.]*

*Stray Man. One moment, little 'un——*

*Child [passing rapidly in and out]. Out of the way ! Out of the way ! Out of the way ! [Stray Man looks up at houses, then goes slowly out left.]*

*[Enter, right, two Charwomen.]*

*First Charwoman [staring straight in front of her, and never stopping to take breath]. And it runs right down my back an' the doctor 'e says it ain't me liver an' 'e says it ain't me kidney an' 'e says me 'eart's all right though I do 'ave palpitations but 'e says me nerves is out of order an' that's what I say an' can you wonder at it the life I lead I'm at it I begin at 'alf-past five I never stop I never look round all these 45 years I never sit down I——[The Second Charwoman is knitting. She occasionally gives a mechanical nod, but otherwise pays no attention to her companion. They pass out left.]*

*[Enter from right a Girl, pretty, soft, happy-looking.*

*Stands by letter-box. Looks both ways. Strolls up and down.]*

*Girl [looking up at sky with a deep sigh of happiness]. Lovely day ! [Strolls out right. Right door opens :*



*Visitor comes out. Young, small, plump, fluffy yellow hair. Fussily dressed. With her comes the Hostess. Some years older. Angular, tidy, dull-haired. Drably dressed. They are saying "Good-bye." They speak simultaneously, and in falsely friendly tones, their voices sounding in rhythmic beats, the Visitor's half a beat ahead of Hostess's.]*

*Visitor.* Well, it's been delightful.

*Hostess.* So nice.

*Visitor.* So glad you were in.

*Hostess.* So lucky.

*Visitor.* Good-bye.

*Hostess.* Good-bye.

*Visitor.* Good-bye.

*Hostess.* You'll come again?

*Visitor.* So kind.

*Hostess.* And you've got the recipe?

*Visitor.* For bottled beans.

*Hostess.* Good-bye.

*Visitor.* Good-bye.

*Hostess.* Bottled beans.

*Visitor.* Good-bye.

*Hostess.* Good-bye. [*They have separated and the door is nearly closed.*]

*Visitor.* And I'll send the address.

*Hostess.* For the shampoo.

*Visitor.* Sunshine shampoo.

*Hostess.* So kind.

*Visitor.* Good-bye.

*Hostess.* Good-bye. [*Door closes. Visitor stands buttoning gloves, recipe in hand.*]

*Visitor* [*speaking in high-pitched voice*]. So you're the woman my husband nearly married . . . He! He! He! Bore. [*Tearing up recipe.*] With your bottled beans. [*Hurrying on.*] I couldn't be jealous if I tried. He! He! He! [*She bustles out left. Right door opens. Hostess comes out holding a pink tulle scarf.*]

*Hostess* [looking down street, left]. Coming here with her cackle, then leaving this! [Contemptuously.] You doll. That's what you are. Not a woman—a doll. With your Sunshine Shampoo. Dye, you mean. [Pause. Speaks with bitter melancholy.] And to think that he might have had me. [Is going back into house when sees bits of paper. Picks them up.] Bottled . . . Oh! . . . Oh! If you dare show your face here again. [Goes into house. Slams door.]

[Re-enter from right, the Girl. She is smiling to herself, making up some conversation. Strolls up and down. Picks up yellow leaflet. Reads title mechanically.]

*Girl* [reading]. Where—are—we—going? [Drops leaflet. A distant clock strikes four. Girl looks both ways; seems disappointed. Suddenly a blissful smile as she looks left. She turns, pretending she has seen nothing. Is much overcome.] Oh! [Looks again, then turns again. Uncontrollable smile. Waits by letter-box, eyes downcast.]

[Enter from left a Young Man. A clerk. Thin, shy, shuffling walk. They shake hands, then stand breathless, at a loss.]

*Young Man* [hardly knowing what he is saying]. I'm not late

*Girl* [ditto]. No.

*Young Man* [nervously]. Where shall we go?

*Girl*. Where'd you like?

*Young Man*. Tea?

*Girl*. Yes.

*Young Man*. Or the pictures?

*Girl*. If you like.

*Young Man* [after a pause]. Shall we start?

*Girl*. Yes. [A pause.]

*Young Man* [more and more breathless]. Let's start then.

*Girl* [ditto]. All right. [Young Man tries to make up his mind to kiss her, but can't.]

Young Man. You've got some new beads.

Girl. Yes.

Young Man [*fingering beads*]. Pretty.

Girl. Yes.

Young Man [*having again tried in vain to kiss her*].  
Shall we start?

Girl. Yes.

Young Man. Let's start then.

Girl. All right.

Young Man [*after slight pause—breathlessly*]. May  
I—

Girl [*breathlessly*]. If you like. [*He kisses her. They pass out left. Slow. Blissful. Their arms creeping round each other.*]

[*Before they disappear enter from left Stray Man.*]

Stray Man. Excuse me, can you—[*Sees it is no use.*]

[*Enter very quickly, from left, the Visitor. Rings bell at right door. Stray Man is going to her, when door is opened by Hostess, scarf in hand. They speak simultaneously, Hostess helping to put scarf round Visitor's neck, and in doing so getting cuff caught in fringe of Visitor's veil. Their voices sound in rhythmic beats, crescendo into violent animosity, then, as they free themselves, down again into grinning manners.*]

Visitor [*her voice half a beat ahead of Hostess's*]. It's for my scarf. So sorry. Thank you. So kind. Good-bye. One moment. Take care. You've got my veil. Let go. Don't tear. Keep still. What are you doing? Really! You're tearing it. For Heaven's sake! *Donkey!* . . . That's right. So sorry. Stupid of me. Thank you. Not at all. Good-bye. Good-bye. So kind. And I'll send the address. Sunshine Shampoo. Good-bye. And I've got the recipe. Good-bye. For bottled beans. Good-bye.

Hostess [*simultaneously with above*]. For your scarf.

Allow me. That's right. Good-bye. Good-bye. Keep still. One moment. Take care. You've caught my sleeve. Stand still. Let go. Don't pull. Take care. How can I? Don't tug. *Idiot!* . . . That's better. My fault. Not at all. So sorry. Of course. Good-bye. You'll come again? Good-bye. For the shampoo. Yes. Good-bye. [*Door is closing. Speaks sourly, the pieces of the recipe still in her hand.*] For bottled beans. Yes . . . Yes . . . Good-bye. [*Stray Man, who has stood by, attempts to waylay Visitor.*]

*Stray Man.* Excuse me, madam——

*Visitor.* Donkey! [*Visitor hurries out left. Hostess peeps her face out of door to scowl after Visitor.*]

*Stray Man* [*approaching*]. Excuse——

*Hostess.* Brat! [*Slams door. Stray Man looks at his envelope very closely.*]

[*Enter, right, the Child.*]

*Stray Man.* Now look 'ere, little 'un——

*Child* [*riding across on her scooter*]. Out of the way. Out of the way. Out of the way.

[*Enter, left, Second Charwoman. Posts a letter. On her return, Stray Man waylays her.*]

*Stray Man.* Excuse me, missus, I want to explain. It's like this. I——

*Second Charwoman.* It's no use saying nothing to me, yer know. I'm deaf. [*Exit left. A fire engine is heard passing in the distance. Stray Man looks up at houses, then goes out right.*]

[*Enter from left a Professor, elderly, and a Student, young, anæmic. They are deep in conversation.*]

*Professor.* Ah, yes; in my opinion there is no doubt we are passing through a most interesting phase.

*Student* [*in a tenor voice*]. Quite so. Quite so.

*Professor.* A most interesting phase. [*Slowly, emphatically, and coming almost to a standstill.*] And the problems that confront our generation are . . . firstly . . . [*He is looking for his matches.*]

[Two young Shop Girls have entered right. They walk briskly across.]

First Shop Girl [quickly]. No, I don't call Jack a nice boy.

Second Shop Girl [all in one breath]. Funny I call Jack a nice boy I don't call George a nice boy.

Professor. This question of new values. [Second Shop Girl stops at left doorstep to do up her shoelace.]

First Shop Girl. Now Sidney, 'e is a nice boy.

Professor. But let me explain what I mean.

First Shop Girl. I did enjoy myself last night.

Professor. It's like this.

First Shop Girl [quite overcome by the memory of it]. I did enjoy myself last night.

Student [extremely tenor]. But surely, professor, what matters . . . is that Society should promote the sum of those forces . . . that while indubitably advantageous to the race generally . . . yet contribute to the development of desirable and life-enhancing activities . . . in the case of the individual.

[Shop Girls giggle at him.]

Professor. No . . . no, my dear fellow, it's not so simple as that. [Professor and Student pass out right.]

Second Shop Girl. Killing! [Returning to their own affairs.] I say, did he kiss you?

First Shop Girl. Kiss me? [Whistles at the memory.] Koo, my dear!

Second Shop Girl [picking up leaflet]. 'Ullo. What's this? [Reads.] "Where are we going?"

First Shop Girl [overcome, ecstatic]. Oh, I did enjoy myself last night. [They pass out left.]

[Enter, left, an Old Lady. Very old-fashioned. Black silk cape.]

Old Lady [smiling to herself]. Delightful. Yes, that's delightful. [She is half-way across when she stops and clasps her skirt.] Gracious! Oh, my gracious! Never, in all my life. . . . [Looks down at her feet.] Now it's on the ground. [Her petticoat

*appears round her ankles. She looks both ways. Then, horrified.]* And here comes . . . My heavenly gracious, if it's not Mr. . . .

*[Enter, right, an Elderly Gentleman. Raises his hat. They shake hands.]*

*Elderly Gentleman.* How are you ?

*Old Lady* *[all of a flutter]*. How do you do ?

*Elderly Gentleman.* It's a long time since we've met.

*Old Lady* *[much embarrassed and smiling]*. Yes, yes.

*Elderly Gentleman* *[pointing right]*. If you're coming this way, I'll come a little way with you.

*Old Lady.* Thank you, no. I wasn't going that way.

*Elderly Gentleman.* Then perhaps you'll come a little way with me ?

*Old Lady* *[at a loss, still smiling]*. Thank you, no. I was just standing. . . Such a charming day.

*Elderly Gentleman* *[expansively]*. Delightful, isn't it ?

*Old Lady* Real summer.

*Elderly Gentleman.* Ah, yes. It's the summer. It's the summer. *[Pause. Old Lady sighs and snickers.]*

*Old Lady.* You'll be thinking of fishing soon.

*Elderly Gentleman.* I shall indeed.

*Old Lady.* Yes. Such a charming occupation. *[More and more miserable, yet still smiling.]* Beautiful clouds. *[Tries to step out of petticoat.]*

*Elderly Gentleman* *[gazing right]*. Fascinating. That one there. Look at it, sailing along like some great salmon.

*Old Lady* *[stooping to her petticoat]*. Exactly like a salmon, isn't it ?

*Elderly Gentleman* *[gazing immediately above her head]*. You're quite right. One could stand here for ever watching these clouds.

*Old Lady* *[erect]*. Yes . . . er . . . *[pause]*. Perhaps you wouldn't mind posting this letter for me ? *[Takes letter from bag.]*

*Elderly Gentleman.* Certainly. [*Old Lady stoops to her petticoat. Just before he gets to the letter-box.*] One moment. This has been posted before.

*Old Lady* [*spreading her skirt over petticoat*]. You don't say so?

*Elderly Gentleman* [*laughing*]. Lucky I noticed it, wasn't it?

*Old Lady* [*returning letter to bag*]. Dear me, dear me.

*Elderly Gentleman.* But won't you come for a little stroll?

*Old Lady* [*utterly at a loss*]. Really . . . I can't explain . . . but I don't seem to want to stir.

*Elderly Gentleman* [*settling down with a deep sigh of contentment*]. Well, upon my word, no more do I. [*Girl and Young Man pass through left to right. Arms round each other. Kissing.*] Well I never! The manners of young people have changed since our young days. Eh, what?

*Old Lady.* I'm quite sure we never . . . I mean, I never . . . I mean . . . not quite like that, did we?

*Elderly Gentleman* [*still gazing after them*]. Upon my word!

*Old Lady* [*having deliberately dropped her handkerchief in front of her*]. Oh, look. The young woman has dropped her handkerchief. Do run after her with it.

*Elderly Gentleman* [*picking it up*]. Really, one hardly likes to disturb them.

*Old Lady.* Oh, but, please. She may begin to sneeze. Or—if her nose should bleed. So very awkward.

[*She tries to step out of her petticoat while Elderly Gentleman reluctantly goes after them. He stops by letter-box and examines handkerchief.*]

[*Re-enter Stray Man, right.*]

*Stray Man.* Excuse me, madam——

*Old Lady.* Oh, go away.

*Stray Man.* It's only, madam——

*Old Lady* [*hurriedly*]. Do go away! Do go away!

*Stray Man.* I only——

*Old Lady.* Do go away, I implore you.

[*Stray Man goes slowly out, right.*]

*Elderly Gentleman.* Hallo! Ha, ha! Look here.  
[*Returning handkerchief to her.*] Your own initials.

*Old Lady.* How silly of me!

*Elderly Gentleman.* I'm very sharp to-day, eh, what?

*Old Lady.* Yes, indeed.

*Elderly Gentleman.* You don't mind if I smoke?

*Old Lady.* Oh, please. [*Elderly Gentleman moves away a little and lights a cigar.*]

[*Enter Professor and Student, right. Still deep in conversation.*]

*Professor.* And that, in my opinion, is the crux of the whole matter.

*Student.* Quite so. Quite so.

[*Occasionally the Old Lady gives a kick to her petticoat.*]

*Professor.* The crux of the whole matter. In fact, it is upon the answer to that question that the whole future of Society depends.

*Student [tenor].* And yet, professor, while I agree that it is important that we should reach some formula . . . that will give expression to the direction we should wish to see pursued by the community, so to speak, in its corporate capacity . . . surely there is danger that we become so tied to that formula, so to speak, *qua formula* . . . that the happiness and spontaneity of the individual become—well—merely—so to speak—one more formula.

*Professor.* My dear fellow, as you know, I've written four long books saying precisely that very thing.

[*They pass out.*]

*Student [his voice heard off].* Quite so. Quite so.

*Old Lady.* Interesting talk one overhears.

*Elderly Gentleman [who has been enjoying watching the clouds].* I wasn't listening. I thought they were foreigners. What were they discussing?



*Old Lady.* I didn't catch it quite all. Something about . . . so to speak. . . . [*Suddenly points up to sky on farther side of Elderly Gentleman.*] Look!

*Elderly Gentleman* [*looking up.*] What?

*Old Lady* [*kicking her petticoat behind her*]. An aeroplane.

*Elderly Gentleman.* Where?

*Old Lady* [*stooping to her petticoat*]. There!

*Elderly Gentleman.* Where?

*Old Lady* [*still stooping to her petticoat and not looking at the sky at all*]. There!

*Elderly Gentleman.* Where?

*Old Lady.* There!

*Elderly Gentleman.* I don't see it.

*Old Lady* [*thinking she is now free, and taking a step towards him*]. Dear me, no more do I. Perhaps it was only a pigeon. [*Elderly Gentleman laughs.*] Shall we come a little way? [*She shows the way left.*]

*Elderly Gentleman.* Oh, enchanted.

*Old Lady.* And tell me, how many bull-dogs have you now? [*They go out left, talking. The petticoat, still caught by the end of its long string, follows her out. Sound of newspaper cry.*]

*Voice* [*heard crying off left*]. Crisis. Startling Revelations. Crisis.

[*Enter, left, a Musician, young, long hair, emotional voice. Has just bought a paper.*]

*Musician* [*having at last found the page he wants*]. Concerts . . . 7.45. [*Puts paper under arm and posts some letters, retaining one at which he gazes rapturously.*] My love. My joy. My heaven. [*Takes letter out of envelope. Scribbles a P.S.*] Seventy-five. [*Closes letter, kisses it, then posts it. Left door opens. Hostess comes out. Dreary. Cross.*] I shall see her to-morrow evening. What will she say?

*Hostess* [*reading her postcard*]. Mutton. Scrag end.

[*Posts it and goes in again.*]

[*Meanwhile, Musician has rung bell at left door.*]

*Left window is opened by Actor. He is dressed as a monkey, but wears no mask. Has a mild face.]*

*Actor.* Hullo! It's you. *[Withdraws.]*

*Musician.* I say, I've written to her.

*Voice [heard off].* Crisis. Startling Revelations. Crisis.

*Actor [opening door. Much pleased and excited].* I say, have you heard? I've got a part in "Pop, Pop." The monkey's part. My dress rehearsal begins in half an hour.

*Musician.* Splendid. *[Clutching his friend's arm, on a deep note, dramatically.]* I've written to her.

*Actor.* Have you! Good. But get me a taxi. I must start at once.

*Musician [on a higher note. Loud. Exalted].* I've written to her.

*Actor.* I brought this wretched costume home to practise that tail dance, and I've no time to change.

*Musician.* I've torn open my heart before her. What will she say!

*Actor.* Quick, a taxi . . . I must start . . .

*Musician.* But what will she say!

*Actor.* Do buck up, old boy. *[Musician starts going out, right, head in air.]*

*Musician.* My love. My joy. *[He disappears.]*

*Actor [calling after him].* At once.

*Musician [voice heard off].* My heaven.

*Actor.* A taxi. *[Closes door.]*

*[Enter, left, Old Lady, her petticoat still running after her.]*

*Old Lady [smiling].* That was very clever of me. Very clever. I escaped while he was buying a newspaper. *[Looks round her.]* But where is it? I made sure I left it on this doorstep. *[Sees it. Horrified.]* Oh! Oh! And I've asked him to tea tomorrow. *[Is going to pick it up, almost in tears. Looks left.]* What? . . . No. . . . *[Loud with distress at sight of Elderly Gentleman approaching.]* My heavenly

gracious, yes. Here he comes again. [*Quickly comes forward, close to letter-box. Stands on petticoat. Waits, facing forward.*]

[*Enter Stray Man, right.*]

Stray Man. Excuse me, madam——

Old Lady [*escaping round the letter-box with horrified whispers*]. Do go away. Do go away. My gracious, man, you'll send me mad. [*Sound of newspaper cry.*]

Voice [*off*]. Crisis. Startling revelations. Crisis.

[*Re-enter, left, the Elderly Gentleman, absorbed in newspaper.*]

Elderly Gentleman. Astounding. Stupendous. [*Reads.*] "A pike weighing thirty-three pounds. Forty-nine inches long." Forty-nine inches long! Astounding!

Stray Man. Excuse me, sir——

Elderly Gentleman [*looking at Stray Man over top of paper*]. Stupendous! [*Passes out, right. Stray Man watches Old Lady.*]

Old Lady. Now, you dare! [*Stray Man shrugs his shoulders. Turns and stands looking up at houses. Old Lady tugs her petticoat free, and tries to stuff it into the letter-box.*]

The postman shall give it to his wife. [*Hurries out, left.*]

[*Enter, right, Curate.*]

Stray Man. Excuse me, sir. I want to explain. It's like this. I'm a bit blind, and I can't——

Curate [*smiling amiably*]. One moment. It was you who accosted me before, if I remember right?

Stray Man. May be. I want to explain, I'm a bit blind, and I can't——

Curate. Ho, ho! Still on the same spot. No, no, my good friend, no, no. We are all of us a little bit blind. [*Gives him a leaflet. Stray Man turns away disgusted. Drops leaflet. Curate goes out smiling.*]

[*Enter from right Girl and Young Man, their arms around each other, gazing into each other's eyes. Stray Man looks at them hopelessly.*]

[Enter from left, running hard, a Husband. No hat on. In avoiding the Stray Man he collides with the Lovers, separating them.]

Husband [loud, excited, and still running]. Sorry. Fetch a doctor. Baby. [Disappears right.]

[Lovers, undisturbed, come together again and pass out left. Stray Man rings bell at right door. Hostess opens.]

Stray Man. Excuse me——

Hostess [pointing to notice "No Hawkers"]. Can't you read? [Slams door.]

Stray Man [looks at his envelope. Sighs]. Patience! [Goes wearily out left.]

[Actor comes out of the door. He is now dressed as a monkey, mask and all.]

Actor. My taxi. No sign of it. [He goes along street right. Waits. Speaks anxiously.] My taxi. [Goes out right.]

[Enter Rich Lady, left. She has one glove off, and is pinning a large red rose to the front of her dress. Takes small mirror from her bag, looks herself up and down. Rearranges rose in different positions. Muses triumphantly.]

Rich Lady. A rose. A red rose. Ree-markably becoming. [Holds mirror close to face.] Ha! If I haven't a smut! Ha! To have arrived at a reception with a smut! [Is wetting her little finger to remove smut, when Actor returns.]

[Lady screams. Drops glove, rose, and mirror, and bolts through door Actor has left open. Slams it.]

Actor. Confound it! [He bangs at door.] Open the door. Open. I'm not a gorilla. No, no, no. I'm in "Pop, Pop." You know. The New Revue: "Pop, Pop." [Lifts lid of letter-box and peeps through. Lady screams.] "Pop, Pop." [Actor comes away.] This is awful. My rehearsal. Some one must get me a taxi. [Goes right. Enter, left, Second Shop Girl.]

*Is about to post a letter when she sees Actor. Gasps. Chokes with horror. Actor takes her by the wrist. Speaks reassuringly.* Please don't be alarmed, but I wonder if you would mind——

*Shop Girl* [*gasping*]. No, no.

*Actor*. It's all right. I want a taxi. Oh, Lord. [*Shop Girl faints in his arms. Actor lets her down to the ground.*] I'm in "Pop, Pop." You know. The new revue, "Pop, Pop." [*Shouts in her ear.*] "Pop, Pop."

[*Enter, left, Child on scooter.*]

*Child*. Out of the way. Out of the way. [*She gets off scooter. Stares at Actor, much interested.*] Hullo.

*Actor*. It's all right. Quite all right. Don't be frightened.

*Child*. Whatever are you?

*Actor*. It's quite all right. Don't be frightened.

*Child*. You're a man, dressed up.

[*She looks at Shop Girl.*]

*Actor*. But, of course. Now, look here, my child. I want you to do something for me. Will you run along until you see a taxi?

*Child* [*pointing to Shop Girl*]. Is that your wife?

*Actor*. No. No. No. But listen to me.

*Child* [*catching hold of his tail*]. You've got a tail.

[*Dances round him, laughing and singing.*]

*Actor*. Yes, but . . . Yes, but . . .

*Child* [*sees rose ; jumps over Shop Girl*]. O-oh!

[*Picks it up, smells it.*]

*Actor*. Now, listen to me. Will you run along until you see a taxi?

*Child* [*drinking in the scent*]. How lovely.

[*A fire engine is heard passing.*]

*Actor*. Yes, but listen. I want a taxi.

*Child* [*having flung rose away*]. Listen! D'you know what I am? A fire engine. [*Running to her scooter she has left on the ground.*] Ting a ling a ling

a ling. Good-bye. [*She rides out right.*] Out of the way! Out of the way!

*Actor* [*following her*]. Stop. Hi!

[*Enter, left, Old Lady. Sees Shop Girl, who is beginning to recover.*]

*Old Lady*. My gracious! Adventure upon adventure. Wait a moment. I have a little brandy. [*Takes a small brandy bottle from her bag. Actor returns and stands behind Old Lady. Girl suddenly sees Actor. Screams. Crouches down. Old Lady drops bottle and moves backwards, much startled.*] Don't scream at me, my dear. Don't scream. [*She backs right into Actor. Turns. Gasps. Hardly knows what she is saying.*] How do you do? How do you do? [*With immense control, speechless contortions, yet politest of smiles, she bows and backs out right.*]

*Actor* [*backing left*]. It's quite all right. Quite all right. Quite all right. [*Shop Girl has ducked her head and is crouching, petrified. Enter, left, Girl and Young Man, their arms still round each other, still gazing into each other's eyes. Actor goes up to them. Quietly, reasonably*] I say, I'm awfully sorry. I don't want to bother you. But the fact is, my rehearsal begins in a few minutes. Of course, I don't want to bother you, but if you should see a taxi I should be so very grateful. [*Lovers walk on, unaware; he follows.*] I don't want to bother you. I know I'm a frightful nuisance, but the fact is, my rehearsal, you see . . . I hate bothering you, but the fact is—

[*They all three pass out right, Actor talking hard, Lovers still sublimely oblivious. Sound of newspaper cry.*]

*Voice* [*off*]. Crisis. Startling revelations. Crisis.

[*Enter, left, Curate, looking at newspaper.*]

*Curate*. Dear me. Incredible. In one month two hundred and twenty-three cases of drunkenness. What a world. [*Turns page.*] And the divorces.

[*Sees Shop Girl.*] My poor young woman. [*Bends over her.*] I fear you are not well. [*He supports her.*]

*Shop Girl* [*murmuring*]. That creature.

*Curate*. What did you say?

*Shop Girl*. That creature!

*Curate*. You saw a creature? Oh, no, no, no!

*Shop Girl*. Yes. Yes. Yes.

*Curate*. What sort of a creature?

*Shop Girl* [*murmuring*]. With a tail.

*Curate* [*gazing up*]. A tail? [*Rising.*] Then you have seen a vision. Did this—er—creature seem to say anything?

*Shop Girl*. Pop, Pop.

*Curate*. What did it say?

*Shop Girl*. Pop, Pop.

*Curate* [*reassured and reassuring*]. No, no, no, no. Quite impossible. Something has upset you. [*Sees brandy bottle.*] What's this?

*Shop Girl* [*weakly*]. Give me. . . .

*Curate* [*holding up brandy bottle*]. Ah! I might have guessed. Very sad. And so young. Tz! Tz! Tz! [*Gently reproachful, distressed, yet full of hope.*] My young friend, I have here a little leaflet . . . [*He is pulling a yellow leaflet from his pocket when—Re-enter the Actor*—entitled "Where are we—"]

*Actor*. I say, would you mind—

[*Shop Girl screams, but pulls herself together, rises and crosses to letter-box. Curate gasps, hits the air between him and the Actor with his large umbrella, and jumps up and down.*]

*Curate* [*hysterically*]. Go away! Go away! Ha! Go away.

*Actor*. I'm in "Pop, Pop."

*Curate* [*continuously*]. Go away. Go away.

*Actor* [*shouting*]. Pop, Pop! Pop, Pop! Pop, Pop! [*At last he seizes the umbrella that is still being brandished at him, and is now half open, wrests it from*

*the Curate, puts it up for a screen and runs out right, calling.] Taxi! Taxi! Taxi!*

*[Meanwhile the Shop Girl, plucking up her skirts, has run out left, as hard as she can tear.]*

*Curate [finding himself alone, still half dazed]. I . . . I'm glad I kept calm. But my umbrella. . . . Ah, I should have guessed. The scoundrel. A common thief. As for that young woman, why, of course, his accomplice. As for this [picks up brandy bottle], and this [picks up white kid glove], and this [picks up rose], and this [picks up mirror], and . . . [pulls petticoat out of letter-box. Stands much puzzled, looking from object to object.] Puzzling, to say the least.*

*[Enter, left, the two Charwomen.]*

*First Charwoman. An' it was about 'alf-past eleven I was taken bad . . . [They stare at the Curate.] 'Ullo. . . .*

*Curate. Now don't stand gaping at me, my good women. Pass along. Pass along.*

*Second Charwoman. A little bit daft. [They go on.]*

*First Charwoman. It was about 'alf-past eleven. I 'adn't 'ad nothing, only them two kippers for tea, an' I thought I should a' died. All across my stomach and right down my back. My 'usband 'e give me brandy, an' 'e give me gin, an' 'e send my little gel for a nice drop o' rum. [They pass out right.]*

*Curate [shaking his head as he looks after them]. What a world. But these. [Looks at objects.] Ah! Clues. I shall take them straight to the police. [There comes a moan from the Rich Lady within Actor's house. Curate approaches the door. Another moan. After some hesitation the Curate lifts up lid of letter-box and peeps. Rich Lady screams. Curate turns.] What does it mean? [Examines his face in mirror.] Nothing amiss. [He peeps again. Rich Lady screams again. Curate turns. Shakes his head.] This is not a nice street. [He takes from his pocket a yellow leaflet and slips it through letter-box. Going out right, glove,*



*mirror, and petticoat in one hand, brandy bottle and rose in the other.]* Where, where are we going? [*Stage empty for a while. Then slowly, stealthily, Rich Lady opens door. Still moans under her breath. Her bosom heaves. She looks both ways. Comes out.*]

*Rich Lady* [*looking everywhere on ground and violently dabbing her face with large powder puff*]. My glove. My rose. My mirror. Oh, my reception.

[*Enter, left, Stray Man. He looks worn out.*]

*Stray Man.* Excuse me, madam——

*Rich Lady* [*shouting at him*]. Where's my glove? Where's my rose? Where's my mirror?

*Stray Man* [*puzzled, yet persistent*]. If you please, madam——

*Rich Lady* [*having looked everywhere, returning to Stray Man and storming at him*]. Have you picked up my glove? My glove? My rose? My mirror? I'm on my way to a reception.

*Stray Man* [*quietly but firmly taking her by the wrist*]. Look here, madam. No. Don't struggle. If you please.

*Rich Lady.* Will you let go?

*Stray Man.* No, madam. I won't let go. I've bin in this street a whole half-hour, and I can't stand it no longer.

*Rich Lady* [*exploding with indignation*]. This is outrageous.

*Stray Man.* Listen, madam. [*For a moment she gapes at him speechless.*] I've come ninety miles.

*Rich Lady* [*struggling*]. You brute.

*Stray Man.* And I'm blind.

*Rich Lady.* You beast. Will you let go?

*Stray Man.* No, madam. Listen. [*Again she gapes at him speechless.*] I can't read the numbers of these houses. I want number a hundred and eighty-five.

*Rich Lady* [*struggling*]. Pree-posterous.

*Stray Man.* A hundred and eighty-five, madam.

*Rich Lady* [*pushing him back, centre, and on to doorstep of No. 185*]. Outrageous.

*Stray Man* [*collapsing on to doorstep*]. A hundred and eighty-five?

*Rich Lady*. You're drunk. [*Flinging the word back at him*] Drunk! [*She is hurrying out right. Suddenly stops. Turns. Chokes with terror and tears out left* Upon her heels comes the Actor, still under umbrella.]

*Actor*. Taxi! Taxi! [*Upon Actor's heels comes the Curate leaping along, glove, rose, and petticoat flying.*]

*Curate*. Stop thief. Stop thief. [*Stray Man looks helplessly at passing procession. A distant barrel-organ can be heard.*]

*Stray Man* [*exhaustedly*]. Noise. Noise. Noise. As you like. Shut yer eyes. Shut yer ears. I'm going to sleep. [*Leans against side of door. Closes his eyes. A fire engine is heard passing. Very soon a Servant appears at window above centre door. Shakes a duster.*]

*First Servant*. 'Ow them fire engines keep going by.

[*Another Servant appears.*]

*Second Servant*. Yes. Can't see anything. Can you?

*First Servant*. Over there. Smoke, ain't it?

*Second Servant*. Oh yes. Oh yes. Must be big fire. I say, give us a 'and with this. [*She pushes a dirty piece of carpet out of the window.*]

*First Servant* [*helping her and grimacing*]. My word. It don't 'arf stink.

*Second Servant*. Yes. 'Asn't been shook, not for months. Catch 'old. Shut yer eyes. [*They shake the carpet. Fluff and dust begin to pour down upon the Stray Man. He is too tired to take any notice. His hat and shoulders become covered with dust. At last he is seized with a fit of coughing.*]

*First Servant*. 'Ullo. There's a man sitting on our doorstep.

# THIRTY MINUTES IN A STREET 31

*Second Servant.* Look 'ere, mister, you get off our doorstep. [*Stray Man begins to rise.*]

*Stray Man* [*looking up*]. Can you——

*First Servant.* Now you get off our doorstep.

*Stray Man* [*raising his voice*]. Can you——

*Second Servant.* No. You get off our doorstep.

*Stray Man.* I've come ninety miles. I'm blind.

*Second Servant.* Now don't you stand there arguing. Be off with you.

*Stray Man* [*holding up his envelope. Booming it out*]. Ninety miles. Listen. Ninety miles. I'm blind.

*First Servant* [*at the same time as Stray Man*]. Now you get off our doorstep. Do you 'ear me? D'you 'ear what I say? Get off our doorstep.

*Second Servant* [*shrieking at him*]. Now you just stop that arguing.

*Stray Man.* Listen [*shaking his envelope*]. Look. Listen.

*First Servant* [*same time as Stray Man*]. D'you 'ear us? D'you 'ear what we say? Be off with you. Be off.

*Stray Man* [*resigned and utterly weary*]. All right. All right. Shut yer eyes. Shut yer ears. Shut yer doors. I'm going home.

*Second Servant.* The himpudence. [*Servants disappear. Sound of barrel-organ still heard. Stray Man makes as though to tear up envelope, but stops. Puts envelope to his eyes close.*]

*Stray Man* [*reading*]. U-R-G-E-N-T. "Urgent."

[*Enter, right, the Child. She is nursing her rag doll.*]

*Stray Man goes up to her, speaks desperately.*]

*Stray Man.* Now look 'ere, little un——

*Child* [*edging away from him and lifting one finger*]. Hush! . . . Don't wake her. She's asleep. Hush! . . . [*As Curtain falls she moves on left, finger still raised, still whispering: Hush! . . . Stray Man is seen moving wearily out right.*]

CURTAIN



THE HOUSE WITH THE TWISTY  
WINDOWS

AN EPISODE IN ONE ACT

BY MARY PAKINGTON

*The House with the Twisty Windows* was first produced by the Lena Ashwell Players at the Century Theatre, April 1926, with the following cast

JAMES ROPER, K.C.	. . .	Kynaston Reeves.
CHARLIE CLIVE	. . .	Harold Payton
TERESA, LADY PONTING		Olive Walter.
HEATHER SORRELL	.	Mercia Cameron.
ANNE SORRELL	.	Esme Church.
DERRICK MOORE	. . .	John Killner.
STEPAN	.	Harold Gibson.

The play produced by IRENE HENTSCHEL

The Scene is the cellar of a house in Petrograd during the "Red Terror."

*The play is here given as it was revised and rewritten by the author in 1928.*

Commentary, page 198. Acting Notes and Stage Plan  
pages 225 and 229.

## THE HOUSE WITH THE TWISTY WINDOWS

*The SCENE is the cellar of a house in Petrograd. There is a small grated window high up in the right wall. A door up left opens into a second cellar. In the middle of the back wall two or three steps lead up to a heavy, locked door which gives on the staircase. It is about nine o'clock on a night of early autumn. The cellar is lit with electric light—the bulb fitted with an improvised shade—and is furnished with a table down right, with three dilapidated chairs, and a rough camp bed against the wall down left. Upon this CHARLIE CLIVE is lying, in an attitude of abandonment to emotion rather than illness. Some under-garments are hanging on a clothes-line stretched across above the bed. A looking-glass hangs on the right wall, and in front of this JAMES ROPER, a rather desiccated-looking barrister of 55, is anxiously arranging the scarf which serves him for a collar. He then turns his attention to his shoes, and sitting down left of the table, surreptitiously tries to polish them with his coat-sleeve. While he is doing this Clive sits up. He is a young fellow of 25, whose naturally boyish and open face is furrowed out of all likeness to its ordinary self. He watches for a moment, then bursts out.*

*Clive.* What's the earthly good of doing that?

*Roper.* I beg your pardon?

*Clive.* I said—what the dickens d'you think you're doing?

*Roper* [nodding towards the inner door]. That door lets everything through directly you raise your voice. You aren't making things easier for the women.

*Clive.* I can't help it, Roper. To see you sitting there polishing your shoes——

*Roper.* Only wish I was !

*Clive.* I can't stick it, I tell you—I can't stick it . . . you sitting there while Anne . . . Oh, God! it's enough to drive one crazy !

[*He flings himself down on the bed again. The inner door opens cautiously, and Lady Ponting, her head enveloped in a shawl, steals in.*]

*Lady Ponting.* Mr. Roper—how's poor Charlie ?

*Roper* [*dryly*]. Poor Charlie's just the same as he's been for the last hour, thank you, Lady Ponting.

*Lady Ponting.* Heather can hear him quite plainly——

*Roper.* I know, I know. . . . [*Putting his coat on.*]  
Look here, isn't it nearly supper-time ?

*Lady Ponting* [*retreating a step*]. Oh, I beg your pardon. Were you dressing ?

*Roper.* Hum—well . . . if you like to call it dressing——

*Lady Ponting.* My watch has stopped, you know.  
[*Exit into other room.*]

*Roper.* The deuce it has ! Not a timepiece left between us. Six weeks—we've been shut up here six weeks, and it's gone perfectly——

*Clive.* What's it matter ? Everything will stop to-night, you'll see. The Commissar said they'd keep Anne ten minutes, and she's been away an hour. I never believed in fate before, but I do now. Things are right on us happening . . . happening to Anne——

*Roper* [*walking over to him*]. Now look here, Charles, simply because you're engaged to Anne, you're letting your nerves run away with you——

*Clive.* I'm not the only one. We're all as nervy as we can stick.

*Roper.* Nervy—nonsense ! Why should we be ? Anne's in no danger so far as we know—they've pitched on her to question about this fellow, Derrick



Moore, merely because she happens to have some knowledge of Russian——

*Clive.* I wish to God she'd never learnt their foul language !

*Roper.* We might as well wish we'd never meddled with their foul legal business—and I've no doubt Lady Ponting's very sorry she ever took her nieces out to stay with their relations in this foul city——

*Clive.* Don't make a jest of it, for Heaven's sake !

*Roper.* But after all, we're a lot of English people together, and we'd make a bit of a splash if we sank.

*Clive.* Then why don't they set us free ?

*Roper.* You know perfectly well that we're hostages for that ass, Derrick Moore, who's been raising Cain with his counter-revolutionary speeches——

*Clive.* I hope they catch him to-night ! I hope they flay him alive when they get him ! I'd help 'em—willingly——

*Roper* [*with a stern hand on his shoulder*]. You can't help Anne by giving way to that sort of beastliness. As to what's happening up there——

*Clive.* I can tell you what's happening. Derrick Moore's Anne's cousin, and they think she knows where he is. She won't speak, of course—nothing on earth'll make Anne speak when she doesn't want to—and they'll—they'll—— [*Starting up.*] Jim, I can't stand it any longer ! I don't care what I do—stupefy myself—anything—— [*He whips a small bottle out of his pocket.*]

*Roper.* What's that ? Give it to me, Clive.

*Clive.* I don't know what it is . . . laudanum, I guess——

*Roper.* Where did you get it ?

*Clive.* Out of the other room. [*He uncorks the bottle.*]

*Roper.* Give it here. [*He struggles with Clive, gets the bottle away, and throws it down on the floor.*] You fool ! you utter fool ! [*A bell clangs outside.*] Supper

at last! You'll jolly well fetch it for us this time, Charles.

*Clive.* I can't. Look at my hand—shaking——

*Roper.* We shan't weep if you do spill some of the soup.

[*The door at the back is opened by an armed soldier.*]  
There's Stepan—go on, quick! [*He almost pushes Clive out.*]

[*Lady Ponting now enters from the inner room.*

*Under the circumstances her general appearance is little less than marvellous. Her elegant little figure is clad in semi-evening dress, and a frizz of would-be golden hair surmounts a face skilfully made up to hide the fact that she is Roper's contemporary.*]

*Roper* [*coming down centre*]. Wonderful as ever, Lady Ponting! When I get back to England my first care shall be to start a newspaper called *The Daily Marvel*, solely devoted to you.

*Lady Ponting* [*delighted*]. Then I shall start one called *The Daily Flatterer*, you naughty man! But I think it's so important to keep up appearances before these dreadful Bolsheviks, don't you? [*She pats her hair anxiously.*] You don't by any chance see anything unusual about me, do you?

*Roper.* Only in the sense that all miracles are unusual. . . . Oh, dash! Sorry, Lady Ponting—it's all right . . . but don't look behind you. [*He rushes to the clothes-line, collects the garments, and stuffs them bodily into the bed.*] You didn't notice anything unusual in here, I hope?

*Lady Ponting* [*mendaciously*]. No—unless there were some socks hanging out to dry. . . . [*Sits left of table.*]

*Roper.* Socks? Oh yes, yes . . . socks——[*He pauses.*] Heather coming in for supper?

*Lady Ponting.* Presently, poor child. She's rather upset—naturally——

*Roper.* It's that young ass, Charles—though I suppose we ought to make allowances for him.

*Lady Ponting.* Poor dear boy! he's been so brave and splendid all this while.

*Roper.* The trouble is, he's used up his reserves too fast and got nothing left. I've sent him down for the supper. Better behave as if—Hang it! it is the same as every other night we've spent in this beastly place.

*Lady Ponting.* But is it? [*She goes up to him.*] Mr. Roper, tell me quick, before Heather comes in . . . that firing, close by, this morning—

*Roper.* Some casual attack. We're not far from the fortress, you know.

*Lady Ponting.* But Anne said it wasn't the sort of firing they use in an attack—

*Roper.* If she wasn't in danger at this moment, I'd say—Confound Anne!

*Lady Ponting.* But you assured me she wasn't in any danger—

*Roper.* Of course, of course. Must have been talking in my sleep. Things get on one's nerves, Lady Ponting—

*Lady Ponting.* I know. But you will tell me what it was?

*Roper.* This morning? Volley-firing

*Lady Ponting.* Yes?

*Roper.* They were executing prisoners—in batches, I should judge.

*Lady Ponting.* Oh, but we couldn't hear any—any sounds—

*Roper.* We could.

[*A pause. Lady Ponting moves back to her chair visibly perturbed.*]

*Lady Ponting.* Mr. Roper, what do you suppose will happen to us all if Anne won't answer their questions, and Derrick Moore is never caught?

*Roper.* If you don't mind, I'd rather not start

guessing. [*Shivering a little, he thrusts his hands into his pockets.*]

*Lady Ponting.* You're cold. . . .

*Roper.* Winter comin' on—what ?

[*Heather Sorrell appears in the inner doorway with*

*Lady Ponting's fur coat over her arm.*]

*Lady Ponting.* We've found something to burn in that funny old stove at last—the straw-bottomed chair gives out quite a good heat. Do go in and get warm.

*Roper.* I hope Stepan doesn't start counting the furniture. [*To Heather.*] May I go in ? [*She nods, and as Roper goes into the inner room, comes slowly up to Lady Ponting. Heather looks young for her nineteen years, but there is a pathetic droop to her pretty mouth, and her eyes are haunted.*]

*Heather* [*helping Lady Ponting into her coat*]. No more news of Anne, I suppose ?

*Lady Ponting* [*vaguely—her eyes roving to the floor*]. Not yet—not news exactly . . . but Mr. Roper says she's quite—— [*She stoops quickly and picks up the bottle.*]

*Heather.* What is the matter, Auntie ?

*Lady Ponting.* My—my hair-restorer—on the floor ! And it's gone—every drop !

*Heather.* Your hair-dye ! [*She collapses on the bed, laughing helplessly.*] So *that's* why Mr. Roper takes so long getting ready for supper !

*Lady Ponting.* How can you be so ridiculous, Heather ? James Roper has beautiful hair . . . and all his own, and—oh, it's no use trying to hide it—I *know* mine looks like streaky bacon to-night.

*Heather* [*her hysterical amusement collapsing*]. Oh, what does it all matter ?

*Lady Ponting* [*with dignity*]. You don't realize, child—just to-night, when everything's going wrong—my watch stopped, and poor Anne having to talk to those horrible men, and the firing and everything—that's exactly the time when one ought to be looking

one's own natural self. [*Rises.*] Do you happen to know where the table-cloth is, my dear?

*Heather* [*extracting a piece of newspaper from under the pillow*]. Here you are—it's the only clean piece left.

[*Lady Ponting spreads it over the table.*]

*Roper* [*entering*]. Can I help you?

*Lady Ponting*. Oh no, thank you. Go and help poor Charlie. They always give you men such terrible loads to carry down.

*Roper*. Do him good!

[*The centre door is opened by Stepan, and Clive enters, carrying a tray with bread, a small bowl of soup, and five porringers.*]

Hullo! he doesn't seem to be exactly staggering. [*He takes the tray and puts it on the table.*] Is that really all, Charles?

*Clive*. Yes. . . . [*He leans against the door with his hands in his pockets.*]

*Roper*. Hum . . . Come along, people, and dine. Turtle soup and—er—Charlotte Russe.

[*Lady Ponting seats herself at the table facing down stage, and Heather listlessly crosses the room and sits down on the right, Roper seating himself on the left.*]

*Heather*. Any more news of Anne, Charlie?

*Clive*. No . . . I thought I heard her talking, but I couldn't be sure—

*Lady Ponting* [*brightly*]. And did she sound quite cheerful, Charlie dear?

*Clive*. Cheerful—in that devil's language! They wouldn't even let me listen—Stepan threatened to shoot me . . . wish he'd done it!

*Roper*. Go and get the salt, Charles. He may go in, mayn't he, Lady Ponting?

*Lady Ponting*. Of course. It's up on the stove, Charlie, to be out of the way of the rats.

[*Clive rouses himself with an effort, and slouches into the inner room.*]

*Heather.* How frightfully nervy you all are to-night !

*Lady Ponting.* My dear child, I assure you I feel perfectly calm, but for that little upset—— [*Her hand strays to her hair.*]

*Roper.* Never had a fit of nerves in my life.

*Heather.* It takes different people different ways. Now I can see you're trying to cover things up all the while. It's much better to face them.

*Roper.* I wish to goodness I knew of anything to hide. That's the whole trouble. We none of us know what's going to happen. [*Pours soup into bowl and passes it to Lady Ponting.*]

*Lady Ponting.* Oh, I couldn't possibly manage all this !

*Roper.* There's plenty more for Heather. [*Shouting.*] Salt forward, Charles !

*Clive* [*entering*]. What ?

*Roper.* Didn't you get the salt ?

*Clive.* I didn't look. [*Comes down centre and speaks accusingly to Heather.*] Where've you put Anne's photograph ?

[*Roper starts up with an impatient exclamation, and dashes into the next room.*]

*Heather.* That snapshot the Commissar's wife took ? I put it away.

*Clive.* That's it ! You're frightened too.

*Heather.* Frightened ? [*She stares at him with a new alarm.*]

*Clive.* Like all the rest of us.

[*Roper returns with the salt and seats himself, pushing back his chair a little.*]

*Heather.* Why are you leaving Auntie and me to dine alone in state ?

*Roper.* Ask Charles. That's all he brought.

*Clive.* I can't touch it.

*Heather.* And I've got more than my share. [*Empties half her soup back into the bowl.*] We won't

have another drop till Mr. Roper begins, will we, Auntie ?

*Roper.* Oh well, I'll eat up Charles's share with pleasure. [*Falls to. Clive goes down left, and seats himself on the bottom of the bed, his back turned to the others.*]

*Lady Ponting.* I can't think why they sent up so much less than usual.

*Clive.* Can't you ? Same reason as everything else.

*Roper.* Ten to one Stepan didn't give any reason.

*Heather.* But Stepan did say something, didn't he, Charlie ? [*Clive nods.*] What was it ? I want to hear the exact words.

*Clive [slowly].* If you really want to know, I told him it was only half rations, and he said, " It's all one : it won't matter to you by the morning."

[*There is a moment's dead silence.*]

*Roper.* Oh, come, come—I take it that it means we're going to be released.

*Clive.* Think so ?

*Roper.* Confound you ! I do think so [*He starts up and comes to the middle of the room.*] What else could it mean ?

*Heather [rising, and coming down to the foot of the table].* I should think it might mean—something quite different.

*Lady Ponting.* Mr. Roper—Heather—you haven't finished your soup.

*Heather.* I don't want any more—no, really, Auntie. . . .

*Lady Ponting.* Very well, dear, I quite understand. [*Producing a flask.*] Would you like a little drop of brandy instead ?

*Heather [impatiently].* Why should I ? We're not all going to be shot at once, I suppose ?

*Lady Ponting.* Dear child, how impetuous you are ! [*Comes centre to Roper.*] Mr. Roper—a little spot now. . . .

*Roper.* I don't need any fortifying, thanks. You'd better stiffen Charles up, or he'll get on everybody else's nerves as well as his own. [*Moves up right centre.*]

*Lady Ponting* [*coming down to Clive*]. Charlie—just a wee drop?—a little in the soup? I know it sounds very naughty, but I'm quite sure my cook used to put—

*Clive.* Oh, for Heaven's sake! [*He starts up.*]

*Heather.* Listen! isn't that Stepan coming back for the tray?

*Clive* [*going right centre towards the door*]. I can't stand this! I'm going to find Anne—I'll make him take me—

*Roper* [*placing himself between Clive and the door*]. You know perfectly well they won't let you through. [*As Clive strikes out at him blindly.*] Behave yourself, man! Good Lord! Anne's not the only woman in the world.

*Heather.* Charlie—Mr. Roper—I'm certain I hear somebody with Stepan. . . .

*Roper.* The Commissar! [*All stiffen involuntarily. Then the door is thrown open—ANNE SORRELL enters alone—and the door is closed behind her.*]

*Clive.* Anne!

*Lady Ponting.* Oh my darling girl!

[*They surround her, all talking at once.*]

<i>Roper</i>	} [ <i>together</i> ]. {	What sort of time have you had?
<i>Heather</i>		Were they rough to you, darling?
<i>Lady Ponting</i>		Could you understand anything they said?
<i>Clive</i>		Anne! . . . Anne! . . . Anne! . . .

*Anne* [*laughing*]. Yes—no . . . Yes—no. . . . I can't hear a word!

*Clive* [*his arm round her*]. What's it all matter?



What does anything matter? She's safe—safe and back!

*Anne.* Yes, yes, Charlie—but do let me sit down a minute. You can go on holding my hand. [*She sinks into the chair on the right of table.*] Ouf! I'm tired of standing. I believe they think we're all Olympic athletes in England.

*Clive.* I don't see how you can joke.

*Anne.* Don't you? Oh, Charlie, it's such a relief. I wonder if Communists have any sense of humour?

*Heather.* Never mind them——

*Lady Ponting.* Tell us *all* about it, dearest.

*Roper.* Decent, were they, on the whole?

*Anne.* Oh, I don't know. . . . I couldn't understand half they said—that was why they kept me so long. No, they weren't actually rough, except once——

*Clive.* Once!

*Anne.* Don't look so savage, Charlie. I believe they thought I was misunderstanding on purpose.

*Clive.* Oh you—you'd make excuses for Beelzebub!

*Anne.* You see I wanted to get to the bottom of it all. I've found out one thing. The Commissar's had a bad fright—and he's apt to lose his head and shoot when he's frightened.

*Clive.* Frightened! The Commissar!

*Anne.* Nobody but us has any right to be frightened, have they, Charlie dear? But it's Derrick Moore who's scared him. They say he's the most dangerous enemy of the revolution in Petrograd, and yet he's only a foreigner here. The Commissar didn't even know him by sight until—— [*She jumps up.*] Oh, I don't know why we're discussing all this. It's news, people, news! [*She pauses dramatically.*] We're going to be released to-morrow morning.

*Clive.* I've got all I want, thanks. . . .

*Roper.* Released—to-morrow! Oh, by Jove! [*Goes up centre, fingering his scarf absently.*]

*Lady Ponting.* Released—oh! . . . just as we are?

[*She pats her hair.*] I *should* have liked a little time——

*Heather.* Time! You've had six weeks. You're the most ungrateful lot I ever saw. Do you realize we're going to be set free—able to go where we like?

*Anne.* England for me! They've made it clear they won't put anything in our way.

*Clive.* Anne—what d'you say to being married directly we land? There's certain to be special war facilities at Dover—licences and all that.

*Anne.* My dear boy, we shan't land at Dover.

*Heather.* Oh, don't get married *directly* you land, Anne darling. I simply must have time to get a real pukka bridesmaid's dress.

*Anne* [*suddenly grave*]. Of course this is frightfully good news for us, but I don't think we ought to be—well, talking about weddings. You see—Derrick Moore's been caught.

*Heather.* What—to-night?

*Anne.* Yes—he was trying to get away from Petrograd when they arrested him.

*Lady Ponting.* Poor dear fellow, how dreadful!

*Roper.* Got him at last, have they? By George, I suppose that's why they're letting us out to-morrow.

*Anne.* Yes, I told you he's the one person the Commissar's afraid of. He speaks perfect Russian, and he doesn't care tuppence how much strife he stirs up.

*Lady Ponting.* So Irish!

*Anne.* He says this tyranny's worse than the Czar's, and I think I agree.

*Clive.* Well, thank Heaven they've got him, Anne! —I can't help it—the fellow's been asking for it.

*Anne.* I suppose you realize that he'll be shot to-morrow?

[*The women exclaim in dismay.*]

*Clive.* Oh well—he knew what to expect.

*Anne.* That isn't all. They've no prison accommodation except this, and they're going to put Derrick in here for the night.

*Clive.* Whew! the condemned cell!

*Roper* [*coming down centre*]. You know I shouldn't wonder if Moore's got some fantastic last-minute escape up his sleeve. He's quite capable of bringing it off too.

*Lady Ponting.* Oh, I do hope so! What's the poor dear man like, Mr. Roper?

*Roper.* The poor dear man is one of those muscular giants who do incredible things on the films—and sometimes in real life.

*Heather.* Please don't joke about it. It's pretty awful, you know—thinking we're going to be set free to-morrow, while he's——

*Roper.* Yes, you're right. It isn't a lively situation when you've made the best of it.

*Lady Ponting.* We must all be very, very nice to him. [*The others suppress a painful inclination to laugh. Steps heard off, then a tremendous knock at the outer door.*]

*Roper.* Stepan, come to fetch the tray.

[*Stepan appears in the doorway—a sinister enough figure, armed to the teeth.*]

There you are, comrade. Last time, eh?

*Stepan.* Commissar want Comrade Anne Sorrell.

*Clive.* What?

*Stepan.* Comrade Anne Sorrell. [*Pointing to Anne.*] That one.

[*Clive starts forward.*]

*Roper* [*holding him back*]. It's all right, old boy—some formality, no doubt. [*To Stepan.*] Order of release, eh?

*Stepan.* No. More question. [*He grins.*] Commissar angry.

*Roper.* Angry! Why, he's got Derrick Moore safe, hasn't he?

[*Stepan looks at him stupidly, then turns to Anne.*]

Stepan. You come along quick.

Anne. Please don't worry, dear people. I'm sure it will be all right.

Clive [*interposing between her and Stepan*]. You're not going back there again, darling. Roper and I are going. Come on, comrade—march us off.

Stepan. You no good ; not answer question.

Roper. Oh, stand aside, Clive—let me manage this. [*To Stepan.*] Look here, what does the Commissar want to find out ?

[*Stepan shakes his head.*]

How on earth is one to make the fellow understand ?

Anne. He understands you all right, but he's had orders not to say. I expect they want me to identify Derrick—I told you they didn't know him by sight.

Stepan. You do what I tell you, or I shoot—see ? [*He steps threateningly forward.*]

Clive. You beast !—you infernal beast !

[*He springs at Stepan, who throws him off violently, so that he staggers and falls left. Lady Ponting and Roper make a movement towards him, and before they are aware of it, Stepan has dragged Anne out of the room and slammed the door to. Clive springs up and flings himself against the door. Roper grapples with him and finally succeeds in forcing him into the inner room, struggling like a madman.*]

Heather. Anne ! Oh, d'you think she'll ever come back again ? [*She throws herself into Lady Ponting's arms.*]

Lady Ponting. Anne's much more capable of looking after herself than you are, my dear.

Heather. That's just it—she's as firm as a rock. You see, I should blurt out all I know directly, and they'd send me back at once.

Lady Ponting. I'm sure you wouldn't let your cousin suffer through you, dear.

*Heather.* I should, I should!—if it was to save all of you. Auntie, it may sound revolting, but I don't care twopence-halfpenny what becomes of Derrick when I think of you and Anne. Fear debases one—I know it does.

*Lady Ponting* [sitting down resignedly, right of the table]. I don't think one ought to let oneself get panicky; it upsets the judgment. Look at poor Charlie in there.

[*Roper comes out.*]

How is he, Mr. Roper?

*Roper.* Charles? Like a collapsed air-ball. I told him to join us again when he could behave himself. [*To Heather.*] Come, come, Heather—we must hope for the best, you know.

*Heather* [in a small voice]. The Commissar's angry. Anne says he shoots when he's angry.

*Roper.* 'Pon my soul, I'm beginning to be glad that they're shoving Moore in here. Big, burly fellow—any amount of grit in him . . . just the sort to stiffen you up if you need it.

*Heather.* Don't we all need it? [*She moves up right, above the table.*]

*Roper.* I'm not aware of showing any signs of collapse. As for our standing miracle there . . .

[*At this allusion Lady Ponting's overwrought nerves give way altogether, and she bursts into tears.*]

*Roper, deeply distressed, pats her shoulder.*]

There, there . . . six weeks of it—enough to get on any one's nerves. Oh, dash it! isn't there anything one can give her?

[*Heather absently hands him the hair-dye bottle from the table.*]

Take a little of this, my dear. I don't know what it is, but it came out of your room.

[*Lady Ponting gives one glance at the bottle and breaks into hysterical laughter.*]

Oh Lord, Miss Heather—what is the matter?

[*For Heather also has collapsed into something between laughter and tears.*]

Good God, what am I to do with 'em all? I wish to heaven Moore would come! He's the sort of fellow to deal with the situation.

[*As if in answer to his wish, Stepan opens the door, ushers in a small, fragile-looking man in an overcoat over evening dress, and bangs the door to again.*]

Heather [*starting forward*]. Derry! You!

Roper. Who the deuce is this?

Heather [*taking Moore by both hands*]. You! You! You, of all people! Why, it's like a fairy tale!

[*The newcomer's tired face relaxes into a whimsical smile. He is a man of forty, indubitably Irish in speech and appearance, but so remote from the powerful vision of his thoughts that Roper can only stare dumbfounded. He has lost his hat, and his hair and dress suggest that he has been roughly handled.*]

Moore. You've got me there, Heather. But this gentleman seems surprised. Wasn't he by way of expecting me?

Heather. Oh, but I must introduce you. Mr. Roper, this is my cousin, Derrick Moore, sometimes called the Irish Hans Andersen.

Roper [*blankly*]. Hans Andersen?

Heather. He used to keep us all quiet for hours when we were little——

Roper. Indeed? [*He shakes hands stiffly.*]

Moore. Only with fairy tales.

Heather. Not admitted in court, Derry—Mr. Roper's a K.C. This is my aunt by marriage, Lady Ponting—you've heard of her. Charlie Clive's in the next room, and Anne—oh, Derry, have you seen Anne?

Moore. Only for one minute—to pass the time of day, as you might call it . . . that's all.

Heather. Oh, then she knows you've been arrested

by mistake, and she'll be able to answer for you. I suppose that's why they're questioning her.

*Roper.* Wait a moment—am I to understand that there are actually *two* persons of the name of Derrick Moore?

*Heather.* Yes—cousins. We call this one Derry, and that one Dick, to distinguish them. Isn't it silly?

*Lady Ponting.* So very Irish!

*Heather.* They're not much alike really, though. You see one goes in for revolutions, and the other for fairy tales. This is the other.

*Roper* [*dryly*]. So I see. And may I ask how they both come to be in Petrograd at the same time?

*Heather.* I haven't a notion. One of Derry's fairy tales, I expect.

*Roper.* Unfortunately I can't look upon it in that light. It's clear they've got hold of the wrong man through some confounded mistake, and they're more than likely to vent their annoyance on us when they find out.

*Heather* [*easily*]. Oh well, they haven't found out yet, so we're safe for a few minutes more. Derry dear, it's lovely to meet you again after all these years! . . . Evening dress too—we're so sick of our grubby old clothes.—Mr. Roper—Aunt Teresa—doesn't he look splendid!

*Moore.* Ah well, I don't feel as splendid as I look.

*Lady Ponting.* I think you look tired-out, Mr. Moore.

*Moore.* Perhaps I am. The last few hours have been a bit of a strain mentally. But I'm through now. [*He comes down to the chair, right, and stands leaning on the back of it.*] I'm afraid my unexpected arrival has given you all a bit of a shock.

*Lady Ponting.* Oh no, it's a pleasure—I mean, for us.

*Roper.* Seems a very odd coincidence, to say the least of it.

*Moore.* It wasn't just what you'd call a coincidence—nor yet one of Heather's fairy tales. You see, when I was rejected for the Army, my cousin Dick's wife begged me to get into Russia and look up Dick, who hadn't been heard of for ten months. I got attached to the Consulate here—and arrested just a week later.

*Roper.* Oh well, you can prove your identity, I suppose?

*Moore.* Oh yes, I can prove my identity. I'm expecting to be—[*he hesitates*—released in about half an hour. [*A composite sigh of envy goes up from the others.*]

*Roper.* The deuce you are! Sorry . . . but your capture has placed us in a very awkward fix. Ten to one the Commissar will wreak his disappointment on us.

*Moore.* Indeed I'm grieved for you all—but I'm glad they gave Derrick a miss. The man has six little children depending on him.

*Roper.* Hum . . . you can afford to be sentimental. We've got to look some very unpleasant facts in the face.

*Moore.* Facts, did ye say?

*Roper.* Yes, sir—facts. I imagine it's a commodity you don't deal much in.

[*Moore pauses, then says very gently.*]

*Moore.* May we hear your facts, Mr. Roper?

[*Before Roper can answer, Charlie Clive appears in the inner doorway, with a face like chalk.*]

*Clive.* Anne! . . . They're torturing Anne!

*Heather.* Charlie, Charlie—no!

*Clive.* I tell you they are. I heard a scream—

*Heather.* Charlie! Oh, it isn't—it can't be—

*Lady Ponting* [*to Roper*]. Jim! go to her quick! You must force the door—

*Roper.* By Jove! I'll have a try for it.

*Moore.* Roper—stop! [*As Roper pauses.*] Can't



you tell them it's pure imagination? None of us heard anything.

*Roper.* How do I know what it was? This place is full of noises.

*Lady Ponting.* Yes, yes—voices . . . and footsteps—as if people were running about all the while. . . .  
[*Coming right to Roper.*] Jim, don't you hear them?

*Heather.* Oh, I can't bear it! I can't live if it's true!

*Moore.* I'm certain that it isn't true, Heather—as certain as I am that I stand here.

*Roper* [*turning on him*]. How on earth do you know? You're getting clear of it all in half an hour. I tell you anything might be true here.

*Moore.* Yes—if you stop to imagine it.

*Clive.* What's it all to you? You don't care . . . you're getting out of it.

*Heather.* Charlie—please. . . .

*Clive.* Listen—there it is again! [*They listen with strained attention, but nothing is to be heard.*]

*Lady Ponting.* I can't hear anything.

*Roper.* I'm hanged if I can either!

*Clive.* You don't care—not one of you! I shall go mad! . . . [*He flings himself down on the bed, pressing his fingers over his ears.*]

*Heather.* He did hear something . . . look at him.

*Lady Ponting.* Oh, my dear, how can one be sure? I thought—there, just now . . . very faint and far away—

*Roper.* Sounds like talking—

*Lady Ponting.* Angry talking!

*Heather* [*clinging to her*]. Oh, what can we do?—how can we get to her? If we only *knew*—

*Roper.* You're right. The worst certainty would be better than this frightful suspense.

*Moore.* Ah, don't say that!

[*Roper humps his shoulders and goes back, left.*]

[*He turns to Heather.*] Shall I tell you what you heard just now? Nothing in the world but your own terrors calling.

*Heather.* Charlie heard more than that.

*Moore.* His terror called the loudest.

*Lady Ponting* [*coming up to Moore*]. Mr. Moore, you may be right after all. We've been shut up here so long that we begin to imagine things.

*Roper.* Nonsense! That's Moore's province. We're simply looking facts in the face.

*Moore.* But do you know what they are?

*Roper.* Since you ask—you're the most damning of 'em

[*Moore pauses a moment, then he says quietly.*]

*Moore.* Sure, you're looking through the twisty windows all the while—and you not knowing it.

*Roper.* Then what the deuce are you looking through?

*Moore* [*with a little smile*]. The plain glass.

[*Roper moves impatiently to the left.*]

*Lady Ponting.* What does he mean, Heather dear?

*Heather.* Oh, some old fairy tale . . . I've forgotten. . . . I can't think of anything but Anne now.

*Moore.* She's safe, Heather. I'm certain of it.

*Roper.* How do you know?

*Moore.* Perhaps there are times when one's allowed to know things.

*Roper.* Moonshine!

*Lady Ponting.* Mr. Moore, you must forgive us—we hardly know what we're saying. It's distraction we need . . . just to be taken out of ourselves for five minutes.

*Heather.* Do you want Derry to tell us fairy tales? [*Her face lights up.*] Why, of course! That's the very thing he came for. [*Going to Moore, she takes his arm coaxingly.*] Derry dear . . . tell us the nicest one you can think of.

Moore [*agitated*]. Heather, it's not to be done! I can't do it—not now.

Heather. But it's *now* we all need it.

Moore. No, no—let me off, Heather, please. I'll do anything but that.

Heather. This isn't like you, Derry.

Moore. Can't you guess it's a difficult thing to be telling fairy tales—under the circumstances?

Lady Ponting. Dear Mr. Moore, we quite understand. But you know we're not in any *immediate* danger—

Roper. May I say that I really don't see how this is going to help—

Heather. Of course you don't. *You never sat on his knee, drinking in every word he spoke.*

Roper. I? Certainly not!

Heather. Don't take any notice of him, Derry. Begin quick, before we've time to start fancying things again.

[*Moore passes his hand across his forehead as if to collect his thoughts, then accepts the position with a characteristic smile*]

Moore. Very well, Heather darlint. But it's hard spinning spiders' webs to a lot of grown-up people.

Heather. Is that all? Then we'll go back for you, Derry. [*She shakes her hair down, and stands smiling at him, looking incredibly childish.*] There! We're in the schoolroom—and it's nearly bedtime.

[*Moore seats himself on the table, and she nestles up beside him.*]

Moore [*putting an arm round her*]. And Anne's staying down in the dining-room for a treat.

Heather. Of course she is! That's lovely of you, Derry.

Moore. There's room for another, Roper.

Heather. Jim's too old for fairy tales. He's just got into *trousers*.

*Roper.* Oh, don't mind me. [*He turns his back upon them.*]

*Heather.* Aunt Teresa isn't really grown-up, you know. Her hair isn't even grey.

*Lady Ponting* [*pleased*]. I shall be a little girl I used to know, called Sarah. She had golden hair too. . . . [*Seats herself on right of table.*]

*Heather.* Charlie!

[*Clive sits up and stares blankly.*]

Can you put the light out?

*Clive.* Are you going to bed? I shall wait up—for Anne.

*Moore.* We're all waiting for Anne. But if we let the moonlight in, maybe *they'll* come along with it. Isn't that the switch by the door?

[*Clive stumbles to his feet and turns the light off, then sits down apathetically on the bed. The moonlight, streaming through the window high up, throws its shadow on the floor. For a moment Moore sits lost in a dream of his own.*]

*Heather* [*touching his arm*]. Derry, begin. Tell us one I know.

*Moore* [*coming back with a sigh*]. One you know? [*He casts about in his memory, then begins in his soft Irish voice, which has something magnetic in it.*] There's a house in the Macree Hills they say was built by the fairies——

*Roper.* Fairies!

*Moore.* It's likely you never saw them—but, anyway, there was one of them living in the water-barrel at the bottom of the potato-patch—and the folks said Larry O'Hara was daft to buy the house . . . though ne'er a bit could he tell about it after, except that there was something queer with the windows of it.

*Heather.* I know! I know! It's "The House with the Twisty Windows"! Derry dear, I've never forgotten it.

*Moore.* Heather dear, if you interrupt, I'll lose the hang of it altogether.

[*Heather nestles contritely against him.*]

Twisty! You may say so. In one place the glass would be waving like a gleaming river, then spiral up to a whirlpool in the middle, and change before your eyes like as if it was living. Down in a corner you'd see a light of blue like a pleasant lake, with the panes above it all crinkled into black and grey mountains; and then again deep as if it had no bottom, like the depth of a still, green forest. . . . And for awhile Larry stood gazing with all the pleasure in the world at the great country before him in the twisty windows; and then and there he set off to look for the pleasant lakes and hills he'd visioned in the glass. Long he walked, and found nothing but the black and yellow bogs, and the dun mountains—and in the evening he came home and dug his potato-patch.

*Roper.* Wise man!

*Moore.* Not so wise, neither—for the twisty windows showed him a different world outside of him every day—and many a time he'd be off on a wild tramp looking for a rainbow or a fleet of white ships sailing—and come home full of disappointment. But at last one fine day when he happened to look out, the window glass ran all purple and black, and full of strange writhing colours: and he took a great fear and stayed at home a whole week, scared to put a foot out of doors. On the seventh day, that Leprechaun I told you of—

*Roper.* Leprechaun? Whatever's that?

*Heather.* I thought you weren't listening.

*Moore.* They're well known in those parts, though they wouldn't be talking about them—and this one felt a queer kindness for Larry, since he'd eaten up all the best of his potatoes. So when he began telling him of the evil signs in the windows, the Leprechaun gave a great laugh, and a mist came up all over the

room . . . and when it vanished away, the twisty windows had vanished with it, and Larry found himself looking through clear glass again.

*Lady Ponting.* I wonder what he saw ?

*Moore.* He saw—he saw what was before him. [*He pauses.*]

*Heather.* Go on, Derry.

*Moore* [*rousing himself with an effort*]. It was on the third evening after that, the Leprechaun came out as dusk fell, and finds Larry O'Hara searching in his potato-patch like a mad thing. "Arrah!" says he, "what are ye looking for now?"—"Ne'er a bit do I know," says Larry, "but it's gospel truth that ever since the clear windows was put in the house, I've seemed to miss something I'm always seeking for—though what it is I can't tell."—"Ah," says the Leprechaun, "and do you not be roaming any more?"—"What's to go after," says Larry—"I've seen once and I've seen all"—and with that his whole loss comes back to him, and he cries out sudden and loud—"Give me back my twisty windows—for there's *Hope* lies behind them!"

[*As Moore ends, there is a moment's silence.*]

*Lady Ponting* [*taking his hand*]. Thank you!—thank you for your fairy tale.

*Moore.* And me that thought I was telling a true story all the while!

*Roper.* Hope! All very well for *you* to hope.

*Clive.* You're getting out of it.

*Heather* [*waking from a dream*]. Derry, I want to speak to you. May I—just for one minute?

*Roper.* I say—let's have the lights on.

*Heather* [*as Moore crosses to right*]. Oh, not yet. Derry belongs to the moonlight.

*Moore.* Not now, Heather. That's only for children—and fairy tales.

*Heather.* But there's something I want to tell you. . . . [*She pauses.*] All to ourselves, Derry.

*Lady Ponting.* Yes, yes, of course. Mr. Roper—Charlie—won't you come and have a little warm? Look, what a blaze! The fairies have kept the fire burning for us. . . . [*She almost pushes Roper and Clive into the inner room.*]

*Heather.* I believe Auntie thinks she's still little Sarah. [*Looking very childish and fairy-like herself, she comes to Moore and puts her hands on his shoulders, too much absorbed to notice that he shrinks at the touch.*]  
Derry dear, may I really tell you something?

*Moore* [*forcing himself to speak lightly*]. Bedtime confidences again?

*Heather.* I don't think you realize that I'm nineteen.

*Moore.* Yes, and I'm forty.

*Heather.* When I was nine and you were thirty, I used to wish you could be my grandfather. When I was fifteen and you—oh, what would it be?

*Moore.* Fifty.

*Heather.* Derry! Well, I used to think then what a young father you'd make, supposing you *were* my father.

*Moore.* Did you spend your time working out these sums?

*Heather.* I'm not noticing you. Because, now I'm nineteen, Derry, I know there's no difference between us at all. You see—you'll never grow up—

*Moore* [*smiling queerly*]. It's true I haven't much time left.

*Heather.* And it makes me feel I can say anything to you. Derry—I've something really serious to tell you.

*Moore* [*agitated*]. Heather, no! Not now, please, Heather—

*Heather.* Yes—now—now, while we're still together. Oh, Derry, I'm glad they're setting you free, and—and I'm not afraid—but I can't help knowing that anything might happen to me before to-morrow

morning. You see, it gives me a kind of right to speak——

Moore. Ah, but I mustn't hear you.

Heather. Yes, yes, you must! [*With great simplicity.*] I love you, Derry—I love you more than I've ever loved anybody in my life. I think I always did really; but to-night, while you were talking, I—I found it out . . . and somehow I felt I must tell you before you went. . . . [*As he is silent.*] Haven't you got any answer for me? Are you going to pretend I've no right to say what I did? Oh, Derry, we may never meet again . . . and if—if I was to be shot, like all those other prisoners——

Moore. Don't, Heather!

Heather. Then if it's all right, won't you kiss me . . . like you used to do before I went to bed?

[*Moore comes quickly to her then, takes her hands, and looks her steadily in the face.*]

Moore. My dear little girl, I'll be doing you the best service if I tell you the truth. You're making altogether too much of a moonlight night and a fit of nerves——

Heather. Nerves!

Moore. They're running away with you, Heather dear, and you not knowing it.

Heather. Oh! . . . [*She clenches her hands.*]

Moore. That's better! Now you'll be angry with me.

Heather. I am angry—very, very angry.

Moore. Then kiss and make it up.

Heather. Oh, you're treating me like a child!

Moore. That's just what you are. [*He kisses her lightly on the forehead. Suddenly she clings to him.*]

Heather. Derry, Derry . . . don't go! . . . don't leave me.

Moore. Heather! . . . Heather! [*His arms go round her. For a moment he holds her fiercely, returning her kisses, as he whispers.*] I didn't mean to tell you, but you know now.



[*A confused sound of voices is heard off, in the courtyard. Lady Ponting, followed by the two men, hurries into the room. Moore draws away from Heather.*]

*Lady Ponting.* Turn the light on, Clive. Oh, those dreadful voices!

*Clive* [*turning the light on*]. I told you they'd come for us——

[*The door is thrown open, and Stepan appears.*]

*Roper.* Well, comrade, which of us is it now?

*Stepan.* That one. [*Pointing to Moore.*]

*Roper.* Oh, ah yes, of course. . . . I'd forgotten. Anne's proved your identity all right, Moore. You're lucky.

*Moore* [*to Stepan*]. Now—at once?

*Roper.* I'd advise you to get away while you can. Feeling's evidently running high. You can hear 'em outside.

*Moore.* Yes—I'm ready.

*Roper.* Good luck to you then! [*He adds with an effort.*] Don't think I'm grudging you anything.

*Moore.* That's good of you.

*Clive.* All the same, it's beastly unfair for Anne!

*Lady Ponting.* Charlie, Charlie! [*She takes Moore's hand.*] Good-bye, Mr. Moore. We'll still go on digging in your fairy garden.

*Moore.* May you find everything you look for!

[*He clasps Heather's hand for a moment, then follows Stepan out. Clive stands staring gloomily after him.*]

*Roper.* So that's that! It's easy enough to tell fairy tales, and believe in 'em—when you've got a certainty ahead of you.

*Lady Ponting* [*coming down right to him*]. All the same, I'm glad you gave him your good wishes.

*Roper.* 'Fraid I wasn't very successful in concealing my feelings. It's you, my dear. . . . [*He takes her*

*hand.*] I'm thinking all the while what's to become of you.

*Lady Ponting.* I know . . . and Charlie's thinking of Anne—we're all thinking of each other . . . and perhaps it makes us just a little bit—selfish.

*[The door opens, and Anne stumbles in, almost running into the arms of Clive.]*

*Clive.* You, Anne—you!

*Anne* *[disengaging herself from his clasp]*. Don't, Charlie—not just now. . . . *[Her voice sounds exhausted—her face is pale and pinched.]*

*Roper.* How on earth did you get in without Stepan?

*Anne.* The door's unlocked—didn't you notice?

*Roper.* Unlocked! *[He goes up to it to make sure.]*

*Anne.* Yes—we're free to go. . . . *[She drops into a chair.]*

*Heather.* Free . . . now!

*Anne.* Yes—didn't I say so?

*Clive.* Anne, you're hurt!—you're ill! Oh, good Lord, what have they been doing to you? *[He kneels beside her, feeling her hands and arms, passionately anxious.]*

*Anne* *[almost fiercely]*. Nothing! I tell you they haven't touched me. Can't you think of anybody else? Can't any of you think of anybody but yourselves?

*Clive.* It's you we're thinking of. . . .

*Anne* *[half to herself]*. I've done right, I suppose. . . . I've done what Derry told me. . . . But it was awful!—awful!

*Lady Ponting.* Can't you tell us what you've been doing, dear?

*Anne.* Answering questions—about Derrick. Didn't he explain? No, he couldn't—you might have stopped him—

*Roper.* Stopped what, in Heaven's name?

*Anne.* You see they don't know Derrick by sight,

and they suspected they might have got hold of the wrong man——

*Roper.* So they had.

*Anne.* Yes, of course. But I had to persuade them that they'd got hold of the right man. Derry made me. He said it was Dick's only chance of getting out of Russia.

*[Heather makes a startled movement.]*

*Roper.* But—but this fellow—Derry, as you call him—he got away.

*Anne.* No : he's in Dick's place now.

*Roper.* What d'you mean ?

*[He is answered by a sharp word of command outside, followed by the sudden, shattering sound of a volley. Heather drops to her knees, her face hidden on Anne's shoulder.]*

CURTAIN



COLOMBINE  
A FANTASY IN ONE ACT  
BY REGINALD ARKELL

## CHARACTERS

DAN'L, *an old man.*

NATHAN'L, *a boy.*

COLOMBINE.

HARLEQUIN.

PIERROT.

A second Old Man.

Commentary, page 200. Acting Notes, page 237.

## PROLOGUE

THERE are circles of green upon Cissbury Hill,  
Where the Pharisees dance—so they say ;  
Revelling merrily round it until  
The dawn over Ditchling is grey.  
And travellers lost upon Cissbury Hill—  
(Pixy-led folk who stray)  
Seated on toad-stools, with fairy folk sup,  
*But here, in Haymarket, the roadway is up.*

There are circles of beech upon Cissbury Hill,  
Where the leaves of a lifetime decay ;  
Hiding the memories, lingering still,  
Of Rome's indisputable sway.  
And under the beech-leaves of Cissbury Hill,  
Throbs the heart of the downland alway.  
While dreaming of chieftains and warriors in woad,  
*You're lighting your pipe in the Charing Cross Road.*





## COLOMBINE

SCENE.—*A Roman Camp on the summit of Cissbury Beacon in the South Downs. A fairy ring occupies the foreground. All round are beech trees. The time is evening.*

*An old man and a boy are seen talking ; both are labourers. The old man, who is seated, speaks :*

*Dan'l.* Well, Nathan'l.

*Nathan'l.* Well, Dan'l.

*Dan'l.* There's little use in stopping here much longer.

*Nathan'l.* Not as I can see.

*Dan'l.* Like my old eyes, the sun don't grow no stronger.

*Nathan'l.* And I wants my tea.

*Dan'l.* Doo ee, lad ?

*Nathan'l.* Ah, main bad.

*Dan'l.* Which means 'tis time to go, I reckons.

*Nathan'l.* That's a proposition as I seconds.

*Dan'l.* Come on then, let's be moving. Tip us yer daddle.

*Nathan'l.* All of a sudden you be in a mortal caddle.

I wants to hear the finish of that yarn  
As you was spinning down at Tranter's Barn.  
A peck of troubles it was all about.

I wants to know how everything turned out.

*Dan'l.* You wants your tea, that's what you wants,  
my son.

*Daddle, hand.*

*Caddle, flurry.*

*Nathan'l.* There's time enough for tea when you be done.

*Dan'l.* Well, though 'tis little enough I read,  
I sid in a story-book years ago  
(Though mind, Nathan'l, there beant no need  
To be letting on as I told ee so)  
That all the troubles as worrits a man  
Was locked in a box when the world began.

And there no doubt they'd ha' bid till now,  
If the dummel soul as had got the key,  
Hadn't got mixed up with a maid somehow  
And gone and handed it over to she.  
And what do ee fancy the maiden did?  
Darn me, Nathan'l, ur lifted the lid.

And all they troubles come trooping out,  
Like hens from a chicken-run might have done.  
For the maiden fancied without a doubt,  
They'd go back in the evening like, one by one.  
But time's got to settle a few more clocks,  
Afore they troubles goes back to their box.

Straight, Nathan'l, 'tis near enough  
To make a methody parson swear.  
And every time as I reads such stuff,  
I goes so red as yon moon up there.  
To think of the trouble ur brought on we—  
I reckon I owes my old gal to she.

*Nathan'l.* Is it true, do ee think, Dan'l?

*Dan'l.* Mebbe, mebbe not, Nathan'l.

*Nathan'l.* Do ee think, Dan'l—she let out the lot?

*Dan'l.* Mebbe, Nathan'l, mebbe not.

*Nathan'l.* Sounds like a fairy story to me.

*Dan'l.* Mebbe, Nathan'l, mebbe, mebbe.

*Nathan'l.* Do ee believe in fairies, Dan'l?

*Dummel.* foolish.

Dan'l. Can't be sure as I do, Nathan'l.

Nathan'l. Well, I don't anyway, and that's fact.

[Enter Colombine.]

Dan'l. Lawks-a-mussey, Nathan'l, be I dreaming  
or be I cracked?

Nathan'l. My goodness, Dan'l, I do believe as she's  
a fairy . . .

Dan'l. Here, come into the shadow of these trees,  
And give that clacking tongue of yours a rest.

Nathan'l. Oh, this be more wonderful than all the  
things I ever guessed.

Dan'l. And it means *summat*, that you *may* depend.

Nathan'l. Sec, where she walks, the grass don't even  
bend

Beneath her feet. She be a fairy, Dan'l.

Dan'l. I wish you'd hold your clacking tongue,  
Nathan'l.

[Colombine, hearing a noise, pauses to listen.]

Colombine. Who's there? The daylight fades. I  
cannot see.

Dan'l. You go.

Nathan'l. No, you.

Dan'l. So please you, miss, 'tis we.

Colombine. Good-evening, sirs.

Dan'l. Our best respects to ee.

A goodish evening, to be sure, but getting dark and  
cold.

Time gals like you was safe abed, if I might make so  
bold.

Colombine. Old man, the night has but begun.

Dan'l. The day be done.

Colombine. The moon has scarcely risen yet.

Dan'l. The sun have set.

Colombine. The sun his wandering footsteps stays  
to greet the crescent moon.

The nightjar and the nightingale will both be singing  
soon.

Dan'l. Us don't set much store by nightingales in

these parts, and as for nightjars ! Oh lor, us shoots they.

Give I a linnet now,  
A-sitting on a bough ;  
As sings his message to the sun,  
And goes to sleep when day be done,  
Respectable like !

*Nathan'l.* [*Coming forward.*]

Queer things,  
These here rings  
You see in the grass  
When you pass.  
They say 'tis where Pharisees dances at night !  
Be that right ?

*Colombine.* Quite right ; yet once the circle that  
you see,

Saw war and tumult.

*Dan'l.* Lawks-a-mussey me !

*Colombine.* The Roman legions camped on yonder  
brow,

And built the road you stand on.

*Nathan'l.* Did they now !

*Colombine.* The sun would sink out yonder in the  
west,

And shine upon their helmets.

*Dan'l.* Well I'm blest !

*Colombine.* The very spot where Julius Cæsar sat,  
Lies just behind those beeches.

*Nathan'l.* Think of that !

*Colombine.* In yonder barrow treasures rare lie hid.  
Dig deep to find them.

*Dan'l.* Well I never did !

*Nathan'l.* But when did all this  
Happen, miss ?  
How many years ago,  
I'd like to know ?

*Colombine.* Roughly two thousand, on this very  
spot.

*Dan'l.* Lor ! What a memory you must have got.

*Colombine* [to *Nathan'l*]. But tell me, please ;  
Beneath these trees,

What travellers come, and whither bound ?

Do still these ancient heights resound

With martial music and the tramp of men ?

*Nathan'l.* Us gets a hurdy-gurdy now and then,  
And once a clown on stilts went through the wood ;  
And oh ! he could catch pennies, that he could.

*Colombine.* But in what fashion do you pass your  
days ?

*Nathan'l.* I kill the time in various sorts of ways :  
Scaring the rooks as settles on the corn ;  
Helping the shepherd when the lambs be born ;  
Talking to *Dan'l* about these here rings,  
And wondering about a power of things  
As don't concern nobody, I suppose.  
But then, you must do summat, goodness knows.

*Colombine.* Of course. 'Tis lonely here without a  
doubt.

What are the things you're wondering about  
To-day ?

*Nathan'l.* Such things as surely never was.  
Such things as surely no one ever does.  
And yet, of nothing, for they moves so fast,  
You finds as you've forgotten them at last.  
Just like a dream they passes and be gone.  
Just like a dream they passes . . .

*Colombine.* Yes, go on.

*Nathan'l.* Just like a dream, for though I thinks a  
lot,

Before they're rightly thought they're clean forgot.  
Though somchow, now I sits and talks to you,  
I keeps remembering things I never knew.  
Just like as though somebody slammed a door,  
When you was going where you'd been before ;  
Leaving you standing on the further side,  
Wondering at what was happening inside.

Whether the folk you knew was there or not ;  
Whether you really knew, and had forgot ;  
Whether you'd been there once when you was small,  
Or whether you was never there at all.  
'Tis plaguey awkerd, wondering, that it be.  
And now I must be off, I wants my tea. *[Exit.]*

*Colombine.* Good-bye. And think sometimes of me.

*[Rousing herself from the brown study into which this revelation has thrown her, and addressing Dan'l.]*

Are you fond of a fight ?

*Dan'l.* *[startled]*. Eh ?

*Colombine.* Are you fond of a fight ?

*Dan'l.* It all depends. Why ?

*Colombine.* There's going to be a fight.

*Dan'l.* When ? Where ?

*Colombine.* Very soon.

By the light of the moon.

On the very stroke of nine.

All for love of Colombine.

*Dan'l.* Shall I fetch a policeman ?

*Colombine.* A policeman ! Dear me, no.

*Dan'l.* Who's going to fight ?

*Colombine.* Don't you know ?

Harlequin and Pierrot.

*Dan'l.* Never heard of they.

*Colombine.* Won't it be fun ?

*Dan'l.* Good fun

For the one as gets killed.

*Colombine.* But they won't kill each other. They never do. They're *most* dependable.

*Dan'l.* Have um fought before ?

*Colombine.* Of course. Hundreds of times.

*Dan'l.* Silly young chaps.

*Colombine.* They're not silly. They're fighting for me. Don't you understand ?

*Dan'l.* I fought about a girl once. But only once. It was a long time ago.

*Colombine.* You're not romantic. Romance would die if it wasn't for fighting. Romance *is* fighting.

*Dan'l.* Then I've had quite enough romance to please me.

*Colombine.* All properly constituted love affairs should include a fight. Love without fighting is insipid.

*Dan'l.* You don't have to do the fighting. Which of 'em loves you the most?

*Colombine.* Why, Pierrot, of course.

*Dan'l.* Then why don't you marry him?

*Colombine.* And disappoint Harlequin? I couldn't do that.

*Dan'l.* When are you going to decide?

*Colombine.* I don't know. [*On her fingers.*] This year, next year, some time, never. To-night perhaps.

*Dan'l.* One day they'll get tired of fighting. What then?

*Colombine.* Never!

*Dan'l.* You're sure of that?

*Colombine.* Oh yes. Quite sure.

*Dan'l.* One of them may get killed.

*Colombine.* They wouldn't be so careless.

*Dan'l.* What should you do if one of 'em got killed by accident?

*Colombine.* I should be very angry. But you're very horrid to suggest such things. Why don't you go away?

*Dan'l.* Good-bye.

*Colombine.* No, stay.

*Dan'l.* Well, I'm fond of a fight, I must say.

*Colombine.* Hush! They are coming. Quick, behind this tree.

*Dan'l.* Anywhere in the background's good enough for me.

*Colombine.* A fight, a fight! And all for love of me.  
[*The orchestra plays quietly the Soldiers' Chorus and snatches of other martial refrains. The two*

*watchers betray tense excitement. Harlequin and Pierrot enter arm in arm. Any differences they have had are evidently settled. Colombine looks on in astonishment.]*

*Harlequin.* Mind you, as girls go, Colombine's one of the best.

*Pierrot.* Ah yes.

*Harlequin.* But nothing to fight about.

*Pierrot* [*without conviction*]. No.

*Harlequin.* And fighting's going out of fashion. There's no doubt about that.

*Pierrot.* Yes.

*Harlequin.* The whole trend of modern thought is opposed to it.

*Pierrot.* Yes.

*Harlequin.* None of the best people do it.

*Pierrot.* I suppose not.

*Harlequin.* And one must be in the movement.

*Pierrot.* Of course.

*Harlequin.* Arbitration's the thing nowadays.

*Pierrot.* What's that?

*Harlequin.* Why, you each talk until you're out of breath, and the one with most breath wins.

*Pierrot* [*taking a deep breath*]. That seems a good idea.

*Harlequin.* It is.

*Pierrot.* But what will Colombine say if we don't fight? She loves to watch us fight.

*Harlequin.* My dear chap, we must be firm. Adopt your point of view, and stick to it in the face of all opposition.

*Colombine* [*advancing*]. Aren't you going to fight?

*Pierrot* [*kindly*]. Not to-night.

*Colombine.* Oh! Why not?

*Harlequin.* Well, we've got  
Other fish to fry,  
That's why.

*Colombine.* Oh! do fight!



*Pierrot.* Not to-night.

*Harlequin.* Now, my dear girl, do listen to reason. You will admit, I suppose, that the most elementary point about a duel is to spit your opponent through the gizzard.

*Colombine.* Yes.

*Harlequin.* Well, I haven't got a gizzard, and what's the use of trying to spit a man's gizzard, if he hasn't got a gizzard to spit? You must be reasonable.

*Colombine.* How do you know you haven't got a gizzard?

*Harlequin.* We don't know for certain, we assume.

*Pierrot.* You've only to look at him to see there isn't room.

*Colombine.* But why the gizzard? What does it matter *where* you spit him so long as you do spit him?

*Harlequin.* For heaven's sake, my dear girl, don't preach such revolutionary doctrines. There is a certain etiquette to be observed, even in a battle.

*Colombine* [after a pause]. But it's quite simple. You spit Pierrot. He's got a gizzard, I suppose.

*Harlequin.* Now, listen. Pierrot consulted a phrenologist . . .

*Pierrot.* Soothsayer!

*Harlequin.* Sorry—soothsayer, who said he was born to be hung. . . .

*Pierrot.* Hanged!

*Harlequin.* Hanged, and so, of course, he doesn't want to run the risk of disappointing him.

*Colombine.* Very considerate, I'm sure. I think you're absolutely *horrid*, there. [Cries.]

*Harlequin* [to Pierrot]. Don't waver, both together.

*Harlequin and Pierrot.* We don't care

Tuppence what you think or say;

We talked the matter over, here to-day,

And arbitration is the only way.

*Colombine.* You're frightened.

*Harlequin.* Don't be silly. Frightened! Me!  
*Colombine.* Well, who's your arbitrator going to be?

*Harlequin* [*taken aback*]. Why yes, we must have some one, I suppose.

But who's to do it?

*Pierrot.* Goodness only knows!

There's not a single person within call.

*Colombine* [*clapping her hands*]. Hurrah!

You'll have to fight, then, after all.

[*There is a pause, during which Pierrot and Harlequin look at each other in dismay. Colombine, on the other hand, claps her hands and pirouettes round the stage. Then Harlequin sees Dan'l and drags him forward, at the same time speaking in asides.*]

*Harlequin.* What's your name?

*Dan'l.* Much the same  
As it's always bin,  
Week out, week in,  
This seventy year and more.

*Harlequin.* Good! We want you to arbitrate.  
You're the very man.

*Dan'l.* Lawks-a-mussey. I'll do it if I can.

*Harlequin.* There's much gold,  
Wealth untold!  
If you only do  
As I tell you to.

*Dan'l.* Fire away!

*Harlequin.* Until to-day, Pierrot and I have been in the habit of engaging in mortal combat for the hand of Colombine. Owing to the fact that up to the present neither has had the decency to get killed, and as a result of the wave of anti-militarism that has swept over the country, we have decided to fall back on arbitration. And you are the arbitrator. You understand?

*Dan'l.* No!

*Harlequin.* Then you're very thick.

Dan'l. You speaks too quick.  
And the way you keeps hopping about makes me fair  
mazed.

Harlequin. Now, listen. One of us is to marry  
Colombine, and you've to decide which it's to be.  
Do you see ?

Dan'l. No.

Harlequin. But it's quite simple.

Dan'l. Maybe. But how do I know which it's to  
be ?

Harlequin. I'll let you into a secret. It's me !

Dan'l. Oh ! And if I goes and sez 'tis you,  
What's yon chap in the white trousers going to do ?

Harlequin. Never mind him. He's a fool.

Dan'l. It seems it don't much matter what I say ;  
I'm bound to upset one of ye either way.  
Oh ! very well.

Harlequin. Colombine ! Pierrot ! Gather round.

[*They sit in a circle ; Colombine and Dan'l in the  
centre*]

Dan'l. I shall catch my death of cold, sitting on this  
damp ground.

[*There is silence, each waiting for the other to speak.*]

Colombine. You don't seem very anxious, either of  
you.

Dan'l. Who goes first ?

Harlequin. If I don't say something, and quickly, I  
shall burst.

Dan'l. Then you'd best get started. [*Aside.*]  
How long will it take ?

Harlequin. Until it's ended.

Dan'l. Cut it short for goodness' sake.

Harlequin. Colombine ! Let me take you away  
from these lonely hills. Into the heart of the world  
where lies the Land of Yesterday. There are stored  
all the happy hours that you have known. You shall  
live them all over again, Colombine—every one. I  
will lead you by secret paths, through the dim woods

of yesternight, until we stand together in the sunlight of the days that have been. Walking backward through the years, we will collect those dear lost delights, of which only the memory remains. From all that has gone before, it shall be yours to pick and choose, and no To-morrow shall throw its ominous shade before. The past shall deliver up its treasures to your hand ; regrets shall be ended, and happiness shall be sure. Will you come, Colombine ?

*Colombine.* No, Harlequin. The road to your Land of Yesterday is longer than you know, and there is no going back. Let us still take from the past our memories and our dreams, but do not ask for more, lest even these be denied.

*Harlequin.* As you will. Then it is to the future that we must turn. Colombine, far from here, set in a desert of hot sand, is a crystal, so large, that all the giants of Africa could not stir it the thickness of a hair. Peering into its depths, you may read your future to the end of time. A day, a week, a year, shall be no barrier to the vision of the mind. You may read all the riddles of the universe, and there will remain nothing that you do not know. You shall see your face as it will be when twice twenty harvest moons have waned, and fifty summer suns have set. And I alone can point you the way. Will you come, Colombine ?

*Colombine.* You promise much, Harlequin. It may well be that in some spot remote from the haunts of men, the Mirror of Fate yet lies hid. And you may find it. Who knows ! But this, at least, is certain ; the path will be difficult and the journey long. Would you not tire by the way, Harlequin ? I think you would. [*Pause.*] And, it is not in distant deserts I would seek. In the woods of home, hearts may thrill to the eloquent silences of the night. [*Harlequin rises.*] All the secrets of the world might be ours, did we but care to learn the simple language of the nightingale.

Across the moonlight, the shadows of the branches trace unforgettable things. Great secrets tremble on the lips of the leaves, and mortals grope vainly in the daylight for things seen most plainly in the dark.

*Dan'l* [*coughing to draw attention to himself*]. I've allus noticed, in whatever parts I med ha' bin, A maid in love have allus got a fairish yarn to spin. And in whatever parts I've bin, I've allus noticed, too, The foolish lads do take it all for gospel, that um do. But though I've kept good notice in whatever parts I was,

I've never heard a maid to spin a yarn like this un does.

Ur be a marvel, that ur be ; I hope as ur won't try, When ur's tired of you two fellows here, to spin no yarns to I ;

For fools be mostly biggest fools when um be old and grey.

And if I went along o' she, what *ud* my missus say ? Next man !

*Colombine*. Come, Pierrot !

*Pierrot* [*with an effort*]. *Colombine* !

*Colombine*. Yes, Pierrot.

*Harlequin*. Go on !

*Dan'l*. Let's hear what you've got to say, young fellow.

*Pierrot*. There is nothing to say.

*Colombine*. Nothing to say !

*Pierrot*. Save that I love you, *Colombine*.

*Colombine*. And is that so small a thing, Pierrot ?

*Pierrot*. But I have nothing to offer you, nothing.

*Colombine* [*softly*]. Save yourself.

*Harlequin*. I have always said that Pierrot was master of sounding silences. The sweetest singer of unsung songs, his eloquent nothings go shrieking through the void. He scorns to desecrate the virgin purity of his foolscap with the written word. What

love is that which dare not tell its love? Come, Colombine.

*Colombine.* See, Harlequin, here is a beech nut. You shake it, yet there is no sound. Is it full? Is it empty?

*Harlequin.* Who can say?

*Dan'l.* Likewise, young Nathan'l he picks up a match-box last week, and throws it away because there was no sound when he rattles en. [*To Harlequin.*] And what do you think?

*Harlequin.* I couldn't say.

*Dan'l.* It was so full all the time as not to rattle at all.

*Harlequin* [*scornfully*]. Matches! ye gods! Let's talk of cucumbers,

Or shame the glory of this summer night

With tales of warming-pans.

Has no one here a button-hook,

With which to probe the vast unsounded deeps

[*To Dan'l.*] Of thy poor addled brain?

It yet may be,

In some uncharted corner of the void

That passes for thy mind,

We find a collar-stud.

Farewell!

[*Exit.*]

*Dan'l.* Well, *he* won't come back again, that I will be bound,

And as I be catching my death of cold, sitting on this damp ground,

I'd best be moving. [*Rises.*] Ugh! Good-night to ee.

*Pierrot.* Good-night.

*Colombine* [*aside to Dan'l*]. And, Mr. Arbitrator, if you see

Your friend Nathan'l, say that Pierrot

Owes more to him than he will ever know.

[*Exit Dan'l.*]

*Colombine.* They have gone!

*Pierrot.* Ah!

*Colombine.* And the night draws on.

*Pierrot.* Yes.

*Colombine.* You are sad. Why are you sad, Pierrot?

*Pierrot.* I cannot tell.

*Colombine.* And you are cold. Is it the night air?

*Pierrot.* The wind-swept wold

Is a street of gold,

So my lady be walking there.

*Colombine.* Yet you are sad. See, they have gone and will not come again.

*Pierrot.* So love may vanish too,  
And of his chain no link remain  
To tell the way he flew.

*Colombine.* Love, as the skylark, soars into that Heaven where't fain would be.

*Pierrot.* And singing still, returns. Time was when you, with Harlequin, would revel till the cold grey dawn came in.

*Colombine.* Light loves sometime were pleasant, but to-night the face of love seems changed. No more will stray this wandering heart of mine.

*Pierrot.* Are you not sorry, Colombine?

*Colombine.* Sorry for what, Pierrot?

*Pierrot.* For loss of Harlequin.

*Colombine.* Harlequin is very clever but he talks of what he does not know, and promises what is not his to give. Cleverness is not everything, Pierrot. The mind is like a garden full of flowers, but

The heart is a little house,  
With windows facing southerly ;  
By which a pathway winds.  
And there, behind the blinds,  
We sit and wait,  
Watching, waiting for what ?  
We know not.

The garden is a pleasant place in summer, but when it is winter, we seek the fireside of the little house.

*Pierrot.* Yet you are fond of gardens and pretty flowers, Colombine ?

*Colombine.* What flowers grow

In your garden, Pierrot ?

*Pierrot.* My garden is full of the flowers,  
My mother planted for me ;  
Curious, old-world flowers,  
Thyme, lavender, rosemary,  
Planted in days gone by.  
And, though no gardener I,  
As the shadows fall, I tend them all ;  
Watering, pruning there.  
Am I happy in my lot ?  
I know not.

*Colombine.* And there is the little house, Pierrot.

*Pierrot.* Ah, yes, there is the little house.

Do you remember when  
You peeped through the pane, and then  
Went on your way again ?  
Out of my sight, although  
I beckoned you as you passed,  
And sat at my window mournfully.  
But you came again at last.  
And, seeing you come, I said :  
“ The flowers in my garden are dead,  
So will she have no more of me.”

*Colombine.* I am knocking at the door, Pierrot.

Knocking and waiting there,  
For the sound of a step on the stair.  
Will you open to me, Pierrot ?

[*Pierrot's answer may be taken in the affirmative. As they sit together, it grows dark.*]

*Pierrot* [*rising*]. Come, dear, and let us go,  
Together, hand in hand,  
Into that sun-lit land,  
Where life and love are things inseparable.  
Where, beneath cloudless skies,  
The happy are the wise,



And none reprove the glory of a love they may not understand. *[Exeunt together.]*

*[It becomes quite dark : Dan'l and an Old Man pass slowly across the stage, carrying lanterns, and peering cautiously into the blackness of the night.]*

*The Old Man.* You was dreaming, Dan'l. That's about the size of it.

*Dan'l.* And I tells ee I wur as wide awake as you be. Us had been sitting over-long by the clump, and all of a sudden I looks up and sees a fairy. "Lawks-a-mussey, Nathan'l," I sez, "be I dreaming or be I cracked?"

*[They pass off, and the curtain falls.]*



MOONSHINE  
BY ARTHUR HOPKINS

## CHARACTERS

LUKE HAZY, *Moonshiner*.  
A REVENUE OFFICER.

SCENE.—*Moonshiner's Hut*.  
TIME.—*The Present*

(*"Moonshine" is liquor illicitly brewed.*)

Commentary, page 202. Acting Notes, page 238.

## MOONSHINE

*Hut of a moonshiner in the mountain wilds of North Carolina. Door back left. Window back right centre. Old deal table right centre. Kitchen chair at either side of the table, not close to it. Old cupboard in left corner. Rude stone fireplace left side. On back wall near door is a rough pencil sketch of a man hanging from a tree.*

*At rise of curtain a commotion is heard outside of hut.*

*Luke [off stage]. It's all right, boys. . . . Jist leave him to me. . . . Git in there, Mister Revenue. [Revenue, a Northerner in city attire, without hat, clothes dusty, is pushed through doorway. Luke, a lanky, ill-dressed Southerner, following, closes door. Revenue's hands are tied behind him.] You must excuse the boys for makin' a demonstration over you, Mr. Revenue, but you see they don't come across you fellows very frequent, and they allas gits excited.*

*Revenue. I appreciate that I'm welcome.*

*Luke. Deed you is, and I'm just a-goin' to untie your hands long nuff fer you to take a sociable drink. [Goes to stranger, feels in all pockets for weapons.] Reckon yer travellin' peaceable. [Unties hands.] Won't yer sit down?*

*Revenue [drawing over chair and sitting]. Thank you. [Rubs wrists to get back circulation.]*

*Luke [going over to cupboard and taking out jug]. Yessa, mister, the boys ain't seen one o' you fellers*

fer near two years. Began to think you wus goin' to neglect us. I wus hopin' you might be Jim Dunn. Have a drink?

*Revenue* [*starts slightly at mention of Jim Dunn*]. No, thank you, your make is too strong for me.

*Luke*. It hain't no luck to drink alone when you got company. Better have some.

*Revenue*. Very well, my friend, I suffer willingly. [*Drinks a little and chokes.*]

*Luke* [*draining cup*]. I reckon ye all don't like the flavour of liquor that hain't been stamped.

*Revenue*. It's not so bad.

*Luke*. The last Revenue that sit in that chair got drunk on my make.

*Revenue*. That wouldn't be difficult.

*Luke*. No, but it wuz awkward.

*Revenue*. Why?

*Luke*. I had to wait till he sobered up before I give him his ticket. I didn't feel like sendin' him to Heaven drunk. He'd 'a' found it awkward climbin' that golden ladder.

*Revenue*. Thoughtful executioner.

*Luke*. So you see mebbe you kin delay things a little by dallyin' with the lick.

*Revenue* [*picking up cup, getting it as far as his lips, slowly puts it down*]. The price is too great.

*Luke*. I'm mighty sorry you ain't Jim Dunn. But I reckon you ain't. You don't answer his likeness.

*Revenue*. Who's Jim Dunn?

*Luke*. You ought to know who Jim Dunn is. He's just about the worst one of your revenue critters that ever hit these parts. He's got four of the boys in jail. We got a little reception all ready for him. See that? [*Pointing to sketch on back wall.*]

*Revenue* [*looking at sketch*]. Yes.

*Luke*. That's Jim Dunn.

*Revenue* [*rising, examining picture*]. Doesn't look much like any one.

*Luke.* Well, that's what Jim Dunn'll look like when we git 'im. I'm mighty sorry you hain't Jim Dunn.

*Revenue.* I'm sorry to disappoint you.

*Luke* [turning to cupboard and filling pipe]. Oh, it's all right. I reckon one Revenue's about as good as another, after all.

*Revenue.* Are you sure I'm a revenue officer ?

*Luke* [rising]. Well, since we ketched ye climin' trees an' snoopin' round the stills, I reckon we won't take no chances that you hain't.

*Revenue.* Oh.

*Luke.* Say, mebbe you'd like a seggar. Here's one I been savin' fer quite a spell back, thinkin' mebbe I'd have company some day. [Brings out dried-up cigar, hands it to him.]

*Revenue.* No, thank you.

*Luke.* It hain't no luck to smoke alone when ye got company. [Striking match and holding it to Revenue.] Ye better smoke. [Revenue bites off end and mouth is filled with dust, spits out dust. Luke holds match to cigar. With difficulty Revenue lights it.] That's as good a five-cent cigar as ye can git in Henderson.

*Revenue* [after two puffs, makes wry face, throws cigar on table.] You make death very easy, mister.

*Luke.* Luke's my name. Yer kin call me Luke. Make you feel as though you had a friend near you at the end—Luke Hazy.

*Revenue* [starting as though interested, rising]. Not the Luke Hazy that cleaned out the Crosby family ?

*Luke* [startled]. How'd you hear about it ?

*Revenue.* Hear about it ? Why, your name's been in every newspaper in the United States. Every time you killed another Crosby the whole feud was told all over again. Why, I've seen your picture in the papers twenty times.

*Luke.* Hain't never had one took.

*Revenue.* That don't stop them from printing it. Don't you ever read the newspapers ?

*Luke.* Me read? I hain't read nothin' fer thirty years. Reckon I couldn't read two lines in an hour.

*Revenue.* You've missed a lot of information about yourself.

*Luke.* How many Crosbys did they say I killed?

*Revenue.* I think the last report said you had just removed the twelfth.

*Luke.* It's a lie! I only killed six . . . that's all they wuz—growed up. I'm a-waitin' fer one now that's only thirteen.

*Revenue.* When'll he be ripe?

*Luke.* Jes as soon as he comes a-lookin' fer me.

*Revenue.* Will he come?

*Luke.* He'll come if he's a Crosby.

*Revenue.* A brave family?

*Luke.* They don't make 'em any braver—they'd be first-rate folks if they wuzn't Crosbys.

*Revenue.* If you feel that way, why did you start fighting them?

*Luke.* I never started no fight. My grandad had some misunderstandin' with their grandad. I don't know jes what it wuz about, but I reckon my grandad wuz right, and I'll see it through.

*Revenue.* You must think a lot of your grandfather.

*Luke.* Never seen 'im, but it ain't no luck goin' again yer own kin. Won't ye have a drink?

*Revenue.* No—no—thank you.

*Luke.* Well, Mr. Revenue, I reckon we might as well have this over.

*Revenue.* What?

*Luke.* Well, you won't get drunk, and I can't be put to the trouble o' having somebody guard you.

*Revenue.* That'll not be necessary.

*Luke.* Oh, I know yer like this yer place now, but this evenin' you might take it into yer head to walk out.

*Revenue.* I'll not walk out unless you make me.



*Luke.* 'Taint like I'll let yer, but I wouldn't blame yer none if yu tried.

*Revenue.* But I'll not.

*Luke* [*rising*]. Say, Mistah Revenue, I wonder if you know what you're up against ?

*Revenue.* What do you mean ?

*Luke.* I mean I gotta kill you.

*Revenue* [*rising, pauses*]. Well, that lets me out.

*Luke.* What do yu mean ?

*Revenue.* I mean that I've been trying to commit suicide for the last two months, but I haven't had the nerve.

*Luke* [*startled*]. Suicide ?

*Revenue.* Yes. Now that you're willing to kill me, the problem is solved.

*Luke.* Why, what d'ye want to commit suicide fer ?

*Revenue.* I just want to stop living, that's all.

*Luke.* Well, yu must have a reason

*Revenue.* No special reason—I find life dull and I'd like to get out of it.

*Luke.* Dull ?

*Revenue.* Yes—I hate to go to bed—I hate to get up—I don't care for food—I can't drink liquor—I find people either malicious or dull—I see by the fate of my acquaintances, both men and women, that love is a farce. I have seen fame and preference come to those who least deserved them, while the whole world kicked and cuffed the worthy ones. The craftiest schemer gets the most money and glory, while the fair-minded dealer is humiliated in the bankruptcy court. In the name of the law every crime is committed ; in the name of religion every vice is indulged ; in the name of education the greatest ignorance is rampant.

*Luke.* I don't git all of that, but I reckon you're some put out.

*Revenue.* I am. The world's a failure . . . what's more, it's a farce. I don't like it, but I can't change it, so I'm just aching for a chance to get out of it.

. . . [*Approaching Luke.*] And you, my dear friend, are going to present me the opportunity.

*Luke.* Yes, I reckon you'll get your wish now.

*Revenue.* Good . . . if you only knew how I've tried to get killed.

*Luke.* Well, why didn't you kill yerself?

*Revenue.* I was afraid.

*Luke.* Afreed o' what—hurtin' yourself?

*Revenue.* No, afraid of the consequences.

*Luke.* Whad d'ye mean?

*Revenue.* Do you believe in another life after this one?

*Luke.* I kan't say ez I ever give it much thought.

*Revenue.* Well, don't—because if you do you'll never kill another Crosby . . . not even a revenue officer.

*Luke.* 'Taint that bad, is it?

*Revenue.* Worse. Twenty times I've had a revolver to my head—crazy to die—and then as my finger pressed the trigger I'd get a terrible dread—a dread that I was plunging into worse terrors than this world ever knew. If killing were the end it would be easy, but what if it's only the beginning of something worse?

*Luke.* Well, you gotta take some chances.

*Revenue.* I'll not take that one. You know, Mr. Luke, life was given to us by some one who probably never intended that we should take it, and that some one has something ready for people who destroy his property. That's what frightens me.

*Luke.* You do too much worryin' to be a regular suicide.

*Revenue.* Yes, I do. That's why I changed my plan.

*Luke.* What plan?

*Revenue.* My plan for dying.

*Luke.* Oh, then you didn't give up the idea?

*Revenue.* No, indeed—I'm still determined to die, but I'm going to make some one else responsible.

*Luke.* Oh—so you hain't willing to pay fer yer own funeral music?

*Revenue.* No, sir—I'll furnish the passenger, but some one else must buy the ticket. You see when I finally decided I'd be killed, I immediately exposed myself to every danger I knew.

*Luke.* How?

*Revenue.* In a thousand ways. . . . [*Pause.*] Did you ever see an automobile?

*Luke.* No.

*Revenue.* They go faster than steam engines, and they don't *stay* on tracks. Did you ever hear of Fifth Avenue, New York?

*Luke.* No.

*Revenue.* Fifth Avenue is jammed with automobiles, eight deep all day long. People being killed every day. I crossed Fifth Avenue a thousand times a day, every day for weeks, never once trying to get out of the way, and always praying I'd be hit.

*Luke.* And couldn't yu git hit?

*Revenue* [*in disgust*]. No. Automobiles only hit people who try to get out of the way. [*Pause.*] When that failed I frequented the lowest dives on the Bowery, flashing a roll of money and wearing diamonds, hoping they'd kill me for them. They stole the money and diamonds, but never touched me.

*Luke.* Couldn't you pick a fight?

*Revenue.* I'm coming to that. You know up North they believe that a man can be killed in the South for calling another man a liar.

*Luke.* That's right.

*Revenue.* It is, is it? Well, I've called men liars from Washington to Atlanta, and I'm here to tell you about it.

*Luke.* They must a-took pity on ye.

*Revenue.* Do you know Two Gun Jake that keeps the dive down in Henderson?

*Luke.* I should think I do. . . . Jake's killed enough of 'em.

*Revenue.* He's a bad man, ain't he ?

*Luke.* He's no trifier.

*Revenue.* I wound up in Jake's place two nights ago, pretending to be drunk. Jake was cursing niggers.

*Luke.* He's allus doin' that.

*Revenue.* So I elbowed my way up to the bar and announced that I was an expert in the discovery of nigger blood . . . could tell a nigger who was 63-64th white.

*Luke.* Ye kin ?

*Revenue.* No, I can't, but I made them believe it. I then offered to look them over and tell them if they had any nigger blood in them. A few of them sneaked away, but the rest stood for it. I passed them all until I got to Two Gun Jake. I examined his eyeballs, looked at his finger-nails, and said, "You're a nigger."

*Luke.* An' what did Jake do ?

*Revenue.* He turned pale, took me into the back room, and said, "Honestly now, mister, can ye see nigger blood in me ?" I said, "Yes." "There's no mistake about it ?" "Not a bit," I answered. "Good God," he said, "I always suspected it." Then he pulled out his gun. . . .

*Luke.* Eh . . . eh ?

*Revenue.* And shot himself.

*Luke.* Jake shot hisself ! . . . is he dead ?

*Revenue.* I don't know—I was too disgusted to wait. I wandered around until I thought of you moonshiners . . . scrambled around in the mountains until I found your still. I sat on it and waited until you boys showed up, and here I am, and you're going to kill me.

*Luke* [*pause*]. Ah, so ye want us to do yer killin' fer ye, do ye ?

*Revenue.* You're my last hope. If I fail this time I may as well give it up.

*Luke* [*takes out revolver, turns sidewise and secretly*

*removes cartridges from chamber. Rises]. What wuz that noise? [Lays revolver on table and steps outside of door. Revenue looks at revolver apparently without interest. Luke cautiously enters doorway and expresses surprise at seeing Revenue making no attempt to secure revolver. Feigning excitement goes to table, picks up gun.]*

*Luke.* I reckon I'm gettin' careless, leavin' a gun layin' around here that-a-way. Didn't you see it?

*Revenue.* Yes.

*Luke.* Well, why didn't ye grab it?

*Revenue.* What for?

*Luke.* To git the drop on me.

*Revenue.* Can't you understand what I've been telling you, mister? I don't *want* the drop on you.

*Luke.* Well, doggone if I don't believe yer tellin' me the truth. Thought I'd just see what ye'd do. Ye see, I emptied it first. *[Opens up gun.]*

*Revenue.* That wasn't necessary.

*Luke.* Well, I reckon ye better git along out o' here, mister.

*Revenue.* You don't mean you're weakening?

*Luke.* I ain't got no call to do your killin' fer you. If ye hain't sport enough to do it yerself, I reckon ye kin go on sufferin'.

*Revenue.* But I told you why I don't want to do it. One murder more or less means nothing to you. You don't care anything about the hereafter.

*Luke.* Mebbe I don't, but there ain't no use my takin' any more chances than I have to. And what's more, mister, from what you been tellin' me I reckon there's a charm on you, and I ain't goin' to take no chances goin' agin charms.

*Revenue.* So you're going to go back on me?

*Luke.* Yes, sirree.

*Revenue.* Well, maybe some of the other boys will be willing. I'll wait till they come.

*Luke.* The other boys ain't goin' to see you. You're

a-leavin' this yer place right now—now! It won't do no good. You may as well go peaceable, ye ain't got no right to expect us to bear yer burdens.

*Revenue.* Confound it all! I've spoiled it again.

*Luke.* I reckon you better make up yer mind to go on livin'.

*Revenue.* That looks like the only way out.

*Luke.* Come on, I'll let you ride my horse to town. It's the only one we got, so yu can leave it at Two Gun Jake's, and one o' the boys'll go git it, or I reckon I'll go over myself and see if Jake made a job of it.

*Revenue.* I suppose it's no use arguing with you.

*Luke.* Not a bit. Come on, you.

*Revenue.* Well, I'd like to leave my address so if you ever come to New York you can look me up.

*Luke.* 'Taint likely I'll ever come to New York.

*Revenue.* Well, I'll leave it, anyhow. Have you a piece of paper?

*Luke.* Paper what you write on? Never had none, mister.

*Revenue* [*looking about room, sees Jim Dunn's picture on wall, goes to it, takes it down*]. If you don't mind, I'll put it on the back of Jim Dunn's picture. [*Placing picture on table, begins to print*]. I'll print it for you, so it'll be easy to read. My address is here, so if you change your mind you can send for me.

*Luke.* 'Taint likely—come on. [*Both go to the doorway—Luke extends hand, Revenue takes it*]. Good-bye, mister—cheer up . . . there's the horse.

*Revenue.* Good-bye. [*Shaking Luke's hand*].

*Luke.* Don't be so glum, mister. Lemme hear you laff jist once before yu go. [*Revenue begins to laugh weakly*]. Aw, come on, laff out with it hearty. [*Revenue laughs louder*]. Heartier yit. [*Revenue is now shouting his laughter, and is heard laughing until hoof beats of his horse die down in the distance. Luke watches for a moment, then returns to table—takes a drink—picks up picture—turns it around several times*

*before getting it right—then begins to study. In attempting to make out the name he slowly traces in the air with his index finger a capital "J"—then mutters "J-J-J," then describes a letter "I"—mutter "I-I-I," then a letter "M"—muttering "M-M-M, J-I-M—J-I-M—J-I-M." In the same way describes and mutters "D-U-N-N."]*

*Luke. Jim Dunn! Jim Dunn! [He rushes to corner, grabs shot-gun, runs to doorway, raises gun in direction stranger has gone—looks intently—then slowly lets gun fall to his side, and scans the distance with his hand shadowing his eyes—steps inside—slowly puts gun in corner—seats himself at table.] Jim Dunn!—and he begged me to kill 'im!!*

CURTAIN





THE NEW WING AT ELSINORE  
A DRAMATIC SEQUEL TO "HAMLET"  
BY ST. JOHN HANKIN



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Among the plays which seem specially to require a sequel, *Hamlet* must certainly be reckoned. The end of Act V. left the distracted kingdom of Denmark bereft alike of King, Queen, and Heir-Presumptive. There were thus all the materials for an acute political crisis. It might have been imagined that the crown would fall inevitably to the Norwegian Prince Fortinbras, who, being on the spot with an army behind him, certainly seems to have neglected his chances. It is clear, however, from the sequel that Fortinbras failed to rise to the occasion, and that Horatio, being more an antique Roman than a Dane, seized his opportunity and by a *coup d'état* got possession of the vacant throne. Nor would Fortinbras appear to have resented this, as we find him subsequently visiting Horatio at Elsinore. There is, however, a Nemesis which waits upon Usurpers, as the sequel shows. The sequel, by the way, should have been called *Ghosts*, but that title has been already appropriated by a lesser dramatist.

## CHARACTERS

FORTINBRAS.

HORATIO.

GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER.

FIRST CLOWN.

SECOND CLOWN.

GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE.

Commentary, page 203. Acting Notes, page 239.

# THE NEW WING AT ELSINORE

## SCENE I

*The Platform before the old part of the Castle as in Act I. of "Hamlet." Horatio and Fortinbras come out of the house swathed in overcoats, the former looking nervously over his shoulder. It is a dark winter's evening after dinner.*

*Fortinbras [shivering slightly]. 'Tis bitter cold——*

*Horatio [impatiently]. And you are sick at heart. I know.*

*Fortinbras [apologetically]. The fact is, when I get a cold*

*I often can't get rid of it for weeks.*

*I really think we may as well stay in.*

*Horatio [doggedly]. I'm sorry, but I can't agree with you.*

*I shall sit here.*

*[Sits down resolutely with his back to the Castle.]*

*Fortinbras [turning up his coat collar resignedly]. It's perfect rot, you know,*

*To let yourself be frightened by a ghost !*

*Horatio [angrily]. A ghost ! You're always so inaccurate !*

*Nobody minds a spectre at the feast*

*Less than Horatio, but a dozen spectres,*

*All sitting round your hospitable board*

*And clamouring for dinner, are a sight*

*No one can bear with equanimity.*

*Of course, I know it's different for you.*

*You don't believe in ghosts ! . . . Ugh, what was that ?*

*Fortinbras.* Nothing.

*Horatio.* I'm sure I saw a figure moving there.

*Fortinbras.* Absurd ! It's far too dark to *see* at all.  
[*Argumentatively.*] After all, what *are* ghosts ?  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
People saw *hoards* of them ! Just ring for lights,  
And let us make ourselves as comfortable  
As this inclement atmosphere permits.

*Horatio* [*despondently*]. I'd ring with pleasure, if I  
thought the bell  
Had any prospect of being answered.  
But as there's not a servant in the house——

*Fortinbras* [*annoyed*]. No servants ?

*Horatio* [*bitterly*]. As my genial friend, Macbeth,  
Would probably have put it, " Not a maid  
Is left this vault to brag of." In other words,  
They left *en masse* this morning.

*Fortinbras.* Dash it all !  
Something is rotten in the state of Denmark  
When you, its reigning monarch, cannot keep  
Your servants for a week.

*Horatio* [*sadly*]. Ah, Fortinbras,  
If you inhabited a haunted castle  
You'd find *your* servants would give warning too.  
It's not as if we only had *one* ghost.  
They simply *swarm* ! [*Ticking them off on his fingers.*]  
There's Hamlet's father.

He walks the battlements from ten to five.  
You'll see him here in half an hour or so.  
Claudius, the late King, haunts the State apartments,  
The Queen the keep, Ophelia the moat,  
And Rosencrantz and Guildenstern the hall.  
Polonius you will usually find  
Behind the arras murmuring platitudes,  
And Hamlet stalking in the corridors.  
Alas, poor ghost ! his fatal indecision  
Pursues him still. He can't make up his mind

Which rooms to *take*—you're never safe from *him*!

*Fortinbras*. But why object to meeting Hamlet's ghost?

I've heard he was a most accomplished Prince,  
A trifle fat and scant of breath, perhaps;  
But then a disembodied Hamlet  
Would doubtless show a gratifying change  
In that respect.

*Horatio* [*irritably*]. I tell you, *Fortinbras*,  
It's not at all a theme for joking.

However, when the New Wing's finished  
I shall move in, and all the ghosts in limbo  
May settle here as far as I'm concerned.

*Fortinbras*. When will that be?

*Horatio*. The architect declares  
He'll have the roof on by the end of March.

*Fortinbras* [*rising briskly*]. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Suppose we stroll and see it?

*Horatio* [*rising also*]. With all my heart.  
Indeed, I think we'd better go at once.

[*Looks at watch.*]

The ghost of Hamlet's father's almost due.  
His morbid love of punctuality  
Makes him arrive upon the stroke of ten,  
And as the castle clock is always fast  
He's rather apt to be before his time.

[*The clock begins to strike as they exeunt hastily. On the last stroke, Ghost enters.*]

*Ghost*. I am Hamlet's father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day . . . [*Stops, seeing no one there.*]  
What! Nobody about?

Why, this is positively disrespectful.  
I'll wait until *Horatio* returns  
And, when I've got him quietly alone,  
I will a tale unfold will make him jump!

[*Sits down resolutely to wait for Horatio.*]

## SCENE II

*Before the New Wing of the Castle. The two clowns, formerly gravediggers but now employed with equal appropriateness as builders, are working on the structure in the extremely leisurely fashion to be expected of artisans who are not members of a Trade Union.*

*First Clown* [*in his best Elizabethan manner*]. Nay, but hear you, goodman builder——

*Second Clown* [*in homely vernacular*]. Look here, Bill, you can drop that jargon. There's no one here but ourselves, and I ain't amused by it. It's all very well to try it on when there's gentlefolk about, but when we're alone you take a rest.

*First Clown* [*puzzled*]. Ay, marry!

*Second Clown* [*throwing down tools*]. Stow it, I say, or I'll have to make you. Marry, indeed! If you mean "Yes," say "Yes." If you mean "No," say "No."

*First Clown*. All right, mate.

*Second Clown* [*grumbling*]. It's bad enough staying up all night building more rooms on to this confounded castle—I should have thought it was big enough and ugly enough without *our* additions—but if I'm to listen to *your* gab, s'help me——!

*First Clown*. Hush! here comes some one.

[*They make a valiant pretence of work as Horatio and Fortinbras enter.*]

*Horatio* [*ecstatically, completely deceived by this simple ruse*]. My Master-Builders!

*Fortinbras*. Idle dogs!

*First Clown* [*Elizabethan again*]. Argal, goodman builder, will he, nill he, he that builds not ill builds well, and he that builds not well builds ill. Therefore, perpend!

*Horatio* [*appreciatively*]. How absolute the knave is!  
*Fortinbras*. He seems to me to be an absolute fool.



*Horatio*. Not at all. A most intelligent working man. I'll draw him out. [*To First Clown.*] When will the house be finished, sirrah?

*First Clown*. When it is done, sir.

*Horatio*. Ay, fool, and when will that be?

*First Clown*. When it is finished, o' course.

*Horatio* [*to Fortinbras*]. There! What do you call that? Witty, eh?

*Fortinbras*. I call it perfectly idiotic, if you ask me.

*Horatio*. Well, well; we'll try again. [*To First Clown.*] And whose is the house, fellow?

*First Clown* [*fatuously*]. Marry, his that owns it. Ask another.

*Horatio* [*to Fortinbras*]. Ha! Ha! Good again. By the Lord, Fortinbras, as Hamlet used to say, the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, it galls his kibe.

*Fortinbras* [*savagely*]. The toe of the courtier is getting so perilously near the person of the peasant that you'd better get rid of the latter as soon as possible.

*Horatio* [*doubtfully*]. Perhaps you're right. And yet I was always taught to consider that kind of thing awfully entertaining. But there. Fashions change in humour as in other things. Send them away.

*Fortinbras* [*giving them money*]. Away with you, fellows. Go and get drunk. [*Exeunt clowns.*]

*Horatio* [*relapses into blank verse on their departure.*] What think you of the New Wing, Fortinbras? The whole effect is cheerful, is it not? Good large sash windows, lots of light and air; No mediæval nonsense.

*Fortinbras* [*who does not admire the building*]. So I see!

*Horatio*. No ghosts here, eh, to stalk about the rooms

And fade against the crowing of the cock?

*Fortinbras*. Probably not—and yet—look there,  
*Horatio*;

There's something in the shadow over there,  
Moving towards the house. It's going in.  
Stop it, Horatio.

*Horatio* [*furious*]. Here, I can't stand this.  
I'll cross it though it blast me. Stay, Illusion !  
[*The figure stops.*]

Are you aware, sir, that you're trespassing ?  
This is a private house.

*Ghost* [*in a sepulchral voice*]. My private house !

*Horatio*. Oh, come, you know, you can't mean that !  
*Your house ?*

Considering that I'm building it myself—  
Of course, assisted by an architect—

I think you must admit there's some mistake.

*Ghost* [*turning and advancing towards them*]. Pooh !

What do *I* care for your architect ?

It's *mine*, I say, *my* house, *my* plot, *my* play.  
*I* made them all !

*Horatio*. Oh, my prophetic soul !  
Shakespeare !

*Ghost*. The same.

*Horatio*. I say, confound it all,  
Do you propose to haunt the castle too ?

*Ghost*. Yes, the New Wing.

*Horatio*. It's really much too bad.  
You've filled the old part of the house with spectres ;  
I think you might have left the new to me.

*Fortinbras*. That seems a reasonable compromise.

*Ghost*. I shall stay *here* ; make up your mind to that,  
But if you like to share the Wing with me  
I've no objection.

*Horatio* [*stiffly*]. Thanks, I'd rather not.  
I shall consult with my solicitor,  
And if he can't eject you from the place  
I'll sell it, ghosts and all ! Come, *Fortinbras*.

[*Exit with dignity.*]

MRS. ADIS  
BY SHEILA KAYE-SMITH AND  
JOHN HAMPDEN

## CHARACTERS

MRS. ADIS.  
PETER CROUCH.  
VIDLER.

TOM ADIS.  
KEMP.  
HOBDEN.

A revised and slightly longer version of *Mrs. Adis* is now published in the *Nelson Playbooks*, and a one-act comedy by Sheila Kaye-Smith and John Hampden, *The Mockbeggar*, appears in the same volume.

Commentary, page 205. Acting Notes and Stage Plan, page 240.

## MRS. ADIS

*Outside, the October night is bitterly cold with the first frost of the year, and the old hammer woods of Sussex stand black and silent round the cottage.*

*Inside, Mrs. Adis's kitchen is warm and stuffy. The cheap oil-lamp on the table lights clearly enough the rough beams and plaster of walls and ceiling, and on the open hearth a wood fire burns in the twisted iron grate. As we see the room the fireplace is on the left. Above it is the table, now laid for supper, with two chairs set ready. In the back wall is a small window, uncurtained except for a threadbare strip of muslin which covers the lower half; the upper panes reveal nothing but darkness. To the right of this is the cottage door, opening on to a narrow strip of grass by the roadside, and in the right wall there are, first, the door of a lean-to shed, and then the door of a bedroom. The floor is of worn red bricks.*

*When the curtain rises Mrs. Adis is bending over a saucepan which is on the fire. A moment later she sits down again in the old basket-chair by the hearth, to go on with the piece of mending she has in her hand, and we can see her clearly. She is a small, frail-looking woman, with a brown, hard face, on which the skin has dried in innumerable small, hair-like wrinkles. She is probably not more than forty-two, but life treats some women hard in the agricultural districts of Sussex, and Mrs. Adis's life has been harder than most.*

*A man's face appears at the window, pressed against the small, leaded panes. He peers anxiously this way and that, to see if Mrs. Adis has company. Satisfied, he disappears. A moment later the door opens quietly*

*and he steps into the kitchen, closing the door behind him. He is a big, hulking man with reddish hair and freckled face, evidently of the labouring class, but not successful, judging from the vague grime and poverty of his appearance. He is bareheaded.*

*Mrs. Adis looks round quickly, and rises as she speaks. Her tone suggests that the visitor is not welcome.*

*Mrs. Adis.* What, you, Peter Crouch! I didn't hear you knock.

*Crouch* [rather nervously coming down to the middle of the room]. I didn't knock, ma'am. I didn't want anybody to hear.

*Mrs. Adis.* How's that?

*Crouch* [his hands shaking a little]. I'm in trouble.

*Mrs. Adis.* What you done?

*Crouch.* I shot a man, Mrs. Adis.

*Mrs. Adis.* You?

*Crouch.* Yes—I shot him.

*Mrs. Adis.* You killed him?

*Crouch.* I dunno.

[There is a moment's silence. Suddenly Mrs. Adis remembers Tom's supper. She takes the saucepan off the fire and puts it on the hearth. The man stands uneasily watching her, twisting his hands together. When she turns to him again she speaks sourly.]

*Mrs. Adis.* What do you want me to do for you, Peter Crouch?

*Crouch* [pleading]. Let me stay here a bit. Is there nowhere you can put me till they're gone?

*Mrs. Adis.* Who's they?

*Crouch.* The keepers.

*Mrs. Adis.* Oh, you've had a shine with the keepers, have you?

*Crouch.* Yes. I was down by Cinder Wood, seeing if I could pick up anything, and the keepers found me. There was four to one, so I used my gun. Then I ran

for it. They're after me ; reckon they aren't far off now.

[*Mrs. Adis is silent for a moment. Crouch looks at her searchingly, beseechingly.*]

Crouch. You might do it for Tom's sake.

Mrs. Adis [*snapping*]. You haven't been an over good friend to Tom, trying to lead him astray, and his father dead in his grave.

Crouch. Not me, Mrs. Adis. I never did that. I think a deal of Tom. And no one couldn't lead him astray. He's been an unaccountable good friend to me, has Tom, ever since we was at school together.

Mrs. Adis. More of his foolishness than your deserving, then. It's a long time since I heard any good of you, Peter Crouch.

Crouch. It's a long time since I had any luck. Not since I came out of work three years back.

Mrs. Adis [*meaningly*]. And why did Mus' Scales sack you ?

[*Crouch drops his eyes shamefacedly ; then tries again.*]

Crouch. Your Tom's the only friend I got, ma'am—except my girl. There's no one—

Mrs. Adis [*sharply*]. What girl ?

Crouch. Anne Winter, down by Ticehurst.

Mrs. Adis. So Anne's taken up with you, has she ? [*More gently.*] H'm, if Anne takes after her mother, reckon she might make a man of you yet.

Crouch. She do. She's so good as she's sweet. She'll come—— [*He breaks off with a start, goes quickly to the door, and stands with a drawn face, listening. Mrs. Adis listens too. They hear nothing, and he comes back to her, pleading more earnestly than before.*] But they'll be after me soon. If I get out of this Anne will come with me. I'm sure she will, ma'am. But I can't get to Ticehurst to-night. I had to come here. Reckon Tom would want you to stand by me to-night.

Mrs. Adis. Well, I won't say he wouldn't, seeing as Tom always thought better of you than you deserved.

Maybe you can stay till he comes home to-night ; then we can hear what he says about it.

*Crouch.* That'll serve my turn, I reckon. He'll be up at Ironlatch for an hour yet, and the coast will be clear by then. I can get away out of the country.

*Mrs. Adis.* Where'll you go ?

*Crouch.* I dunno. There's time to think of that.

*Mrs. Adis* [*dryly*]. Well, you can think of it in here. [*As she speaks she crosses to the door of the lean-to and opens it.*] They'll never guess you're there, specially if I tell them I ain't seen you to-night. It's dark and dusty, maybe, but you can see and hear everything through the crack of the door if you want.

*Crouch* [*turning in the doorway*]. You're a good woman, Mrs. Adis. I know I'm not worth you standing by me, but maybe I'd have been different if I'd had a mother like Tom's. I won't forget——

*Mrs. Adis* [*her hand on the open door*]. Hark ! [*There is a faint sound outside. Crouch disappears into the lean-to. She shuts the door and crosses to the fireplace, where she bends over the saucepan, listening intently. A sound of footsteps and men's voices comes abreast of the cottage. Lantern-light dances on the window-panes. But there is no knock at the door, and the sounds pass. Mrs. Adis goes to the window and looks after the party for a moment. Then she opens the lean-to door, and Peter Crouch, white and shaken, appears in the doorway.*]

*Mrs. Adis* [*shortly*]. That was them. A party from the Castle.

*Crouch.* I heard them plain, ma'am, and I saw you go and look out of the——

*Mrs. Adis* [*disregarding him*]. They had lanterns, and I saw old Crotch and the two Boormans. Maybe it 'ud be better if you slipped out now and went towards Cansiron. You'd miss them that way and get over to Kent. There's a London train comes from Tunbridge Wells at ten to-night.



*Crouch* [nervously]. That'd be a fine thing for me, ma'am, but I haven't the price of a ticket on me.

[*Mrs. Adis crosses to the kitchen table, pulls out a drawer and takes money from it. He follows her, hesitating in the middle of the room*]

*Mrs. Adis*. Here's seven shillun'. [*Giving it to him*]  
It'll be your fare to London and a bit over.

*Crouch* [brokenly, as he puts the money in his pocket].  
I don't know how to thank you, ma'am.

*Mrs. Adis* [half angry with herself]. Oh, you needn't thank me. I'm doing it for Tom. I know how unaccountable set he is on you and always was.

*Crouch*. I hope you won't get into trouble because of this.

*Mrs. Adis*. There ain't much fear. No one's ever likely to know you've been in this cottage. That's why I'd sooner you went before Tom came back, for maybe he'd bring a pal with him, and that'd make trouble. I won't say I shan't have it on my conscience, helping you to escape the law, but shooting a keeper ain't the same as shooting an ordinary sort of man, as we all know, and maybe he ain't so much the worse, so I won't think no more about it.

[*She opens the cottage door for him. On the threshold he is pulled up short by the sound of approaching footsteps, and turns with a frightened face.*]

*Mrs. Adis*. Maybe it's Tom.

*Crouch* [in a low voice]. There's more than one man there—and I can hear voices.

*Mrs. Adis* [shortly]. You'd better go back. Wait till they've passed, anyway.

[*She closes the door. With an unwilling shrug he goes back into the lean-to and she shuts him in. But a moment later, as she is crossing to the fireplace, he opens the door and calls after her.*]

*Crouch* [in a low, terrified voice]. Ma'am, if they come here—

*Mrs. Adis* [angrily]. Keep in !

*[She slams the door on him, takes a large iron key from a nail rather high in the wall beside the door, and locks him in. The lock grates noisily. She puts the key into her apron-pocket and goes to the fireplace. Footsteps approach the cottage slowly and heavily. There is a pause, then a loud knock at the door. Before Mrs. Adis can reach the door Vidler enters and quickly closes it behind him. He comes down to the middle of the room, facing Mrs. Adis in evident embarrassment and twisting his cap nervously in his hands.]*

Mrs. Adis *[staring at him]*. Well, what is it?

Vidler. I—I want to speak to you, ma'am. *[He stops, tongue-tied.]*

Mrs. Adis *[sharply]*. Well?

Vidler. I have brought you bad news, ma'am.

Mrs. Adis *[her expression changing]*. What? It ain't Tom, is it?

Vidler. He's . . . outside.

Mrs. Adis. What do you mean? *[She moves towards the door.]*

Vidler *[intercepting her]*. Don't, ma'am. Not till I've told you.

Mrs. Adis *[trying to push him aside, desperately]*. Told me what? Oh, be quick, man, for mercy's sake.

Vidler. There's been a row. Down by Cinder Wood. There was a chap there snaring rabbits, and Tom was walking with the Boormans and me and old Crotch down from the Castle. We heard a noise in the Eighteen-pounder Spinney, and there . . . It was too dark to see who it was, and he made off—but we'd scared him, and he . . . let fly with his gun . . .

*[He stops short and looks at her, as if beseeching her to fill in the gaps of his story. He has forgotten his guard.]*

Mrs. Adis. Tom——

*[She has reached the door and flung it open. The men outside have evidently been waiting for the*

signal. She backs away from them towards the fire as they come in slowly, carrying something on a hurdle which they put down in the middle of the floor. It is Tom Adis. An old coat has been thrown over his body, but his face is uncovered. Mrs. Adis is leaning against the old basket-chair. The three men have drawn together in a little group.]

Mrs. Adis [*in a dry, clear voice*]. Is he dead?

[*The men nod. Vidler goes to her and helps her into the old basket-chair. Kemp takes a bottle from his pocket and pours something into a cup on the table.*]

Kemp [*putting the cup to her lips*]. Here, ma'am, take a drop of this. It'll give you strength. [*She drinks mechanically, and he takes the cup away.*]

Hobden. We'll go round to Ironlatch Cottage and ask Mrs. Gain to come down to you.

Kemp. Reckon this is a turble thing to have come to you, but it's the will o' Providence, as some folks say . . . and as for the man who did it, we've a middling good guess who he is, and he shall swing.

Hobden. We didn't see his face, but we've got his gun.

Vidler. Ay, he threw it into an alder when he bolted, and I swear that gun belongs to Peter Crouch. He's been up to no good since the day when Mus' Scales sacked him for stealing his corn.

Kemp. Reckon, though, he didn't know it was Tom when he did it, him and Tom being always better friends than he deserved.

[*Mrs. Adis does not hear them. She struggles to her feet, with the key of the lean-to in her hand, and moves over to the hurdle. The key slips from her nerveless fingers and falls heavily at her feet. Swaying, she stoops and picks it up. Slowly and dully she looks at the key, then at the door of the lean-to, and then at the dead man's face.*]

*There is a terrible pause. Hobden has joined Kemp and Vidler beside the chair. They watch Mrs. Adis with frightened faces.]*

*Vidler [unable to bear the silence longer].* The Boormans have gone after Crouch. They'd a notion as he'd broken through the woods Ironlatch way. . . . There's no chance of him having been by here? You haven't seen him to-night, ma'am?

*Mrs. Adis [slowly].* No. . . . I haven't seen him. . . . Not since Tuesday.

*Hobden.* Well, we'll be getting around and fetch Mrs. Gain. Reckon you'd be glad to have her.

*Mrs. Adis [turning slowly towards them, and nodding].* Will you carry him in there first? [*She points to the bedroom door.*]

[*They pick up the hurdle and carry it into the bedroom. She does not move. When they come back, each in turn wrings her hand silently and they go out, but she does not move or speak until the door has closed behind them. Then she goes to the lean-to and unlocks it. Then, with a set face and a heavy dragging footstep, she goes into the bedroom and shuts herself in. There is a pause. The lean-to door opens and Peter Crouch comes out, a broken man. He gropes his way to the cottage door and disappears.*]

CURTAIN

# TICKLESS TIME

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY SUSAN GLASPELL AND GEORGE CRAM COOK

## CHARACTERS

IAN JOYCE, *Who Has Made a Sundial.*  
ELOISE JOYCE, *Wedded to the Sundial.*  
MRS. STUBBS, *a Native.*  
EDDY KNIGHT, *a Standardized Mind.*  
ALICE KNIGHT, *a Standardized Wife.*  
ANNIE, *Who Cooks by the Joyces' Clock.*

The play was first performed by the Provincetown Players in New York, on December 20, 1918, with the following cast :

IAN JOYCE	.	.	.	.	James Light.
ELOISE JOYCE	.	.	.	.	Norma Millay.
MRS. STUBBS	.	.	.	.	Jean Robb.
EDDY KNIGHT	.	.	.	.	Hutchinson Collins.
ALICE KNIGHT	.	.	.	.	Alice MacDougal.
ANNIE	.	.	.	.	Edna St. Vincent Millay.

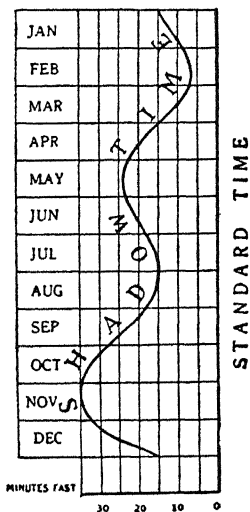
Commentary, page 206. Acting Notes, page 242.

## TICKLESS TIME

SCENE.—A garden in Provincetown. On the spectator's right a two-story house runs back from the proscenium—a door towards the front, a second-story window towards the back. Across the back runs a thick-set row of sunflowers nearly concealing a fence or wall. Back of this are trees and sky. There is a gate at the left rear corner of the garden. People entering it come straight toward the front, down the left side and, to reach the house door, pass across the front of the stage. A fence with sunflowers like that at the back closes off the left wing of the stage—a tree behind this left fence.

The sundial stands on a broad step or pedestal which partly masks the digging which takes place behind it. The position of the sundial is to the left of the centre of the stage, midway between front and back.

From behind the tree on the left the late afternoon sun throws a well-defined beam of light upon the horizontal plate of the sundial and upon the shaft which supports it. On this shaft is the accompanying diagram: two feet high and clearly visible.



*On the plate of the sundial stands the alarm clock. A huge shovel leans against the wall of the house-corner at the back.*

*Ian is at the sundial. He sights over the style to some distant stake left rear, marking the north. He then sights over the east and west line toward the six o'clock sun. Looks at shadow. Looks at alarm clock. Is intensely pleased.*

*Ian [turning toward house and calling excitedly].*  
Eloise! Oh, Eloise!

*Eloise [inside house].* Hallo!

*Ian.* Come quick! You'll miss it.

*Eloise [poking her head out of the second-story window; she cranes her neck to look straight up in the air].* What is it?

*Ian.* Come down here quick or you'll miss it.

*Eloise [disappears from window. A moment later comes running out, one braid of hair up and one braid down. Again looks wildly up in the air].* Where is it?

*Ian [absorbed in the sundial].* Where's what?

*Eloise.* The airplane.

*Ian.* Airplane? It's the sundial. It's right. Just look at this six o'clock shadow. [*She goes around to the other side of it.*] It's absolutely mathematically—you're in the way of the sun, Eloise. [*She steps aside.*] Look! the style is set square on the true north—this is the fifteenth of June—the clock is checked to the second by telegraph with the observatory at Washington and see! the clock is exactly nineteen minutes and twenty seconds behind the shadow—the precise difference between Provincetown local time and standard Eastern time.

*Eloise.* Then the sundial's really finished—and working right! After all these weeks! Oh, Ian!

[*Embraces him.*]

*Ian.* It's good to get it right after all those mistakes. [*With vision.*] Why, Eloise, getting this right has



been a symbol of man's whole search for truth—the discovery and correction of error—the mind compelled to conform step by step to astronomical fact—to truth.

*Eloise* [going to it again]. And to think that it's the sundial which is true and the clock—all the clocks—are wrong! I'm glad it is true. Alice Knight has been here talking to me for an hour. I want to think that something's true.

*Ian*. That's just it, *Eloise*. The sundial is more than sun-dial. It's a first-hand relation with truth. A personal relation. When you take your time from a clock you are mechanically getting information from a machine. You're nothing but a clock yourself.

*Eloise*. Like Alice Knight.

*Ian*. But the sundial—this shadow is an original document—a scholar's source.

*Eloise*. To tell time by the shadow of the sun—so large and simple.

*Ian*. I wouldn't call it simple. Here on this diagram I have worked out—

*Eloise*. Dearest, you know I can't understand diagrams. But I get the feeling of it, *Ian*—the sun, the North star. I love to think that this [*placing her hands on the style*] is set by the North star. [*Her right hand remains on the style, her left prolongs its line heavenward.*] Why, if I could go on long enough I'd get to the North star!

*Ian* [*impressively*]. The line that passes along the edge of this style joins the two poles of the heavens. [*Eloise pulls away her head as one who fears an electric shock.*] Look at this slow shadow and what you see is the spin of the earth on its axis. It is not so much the measure of time as time itself made visible.

*Eloise* [*knitting her brows to get this : escaping to an impetuous generality*]. *Ian*, which do you think is the more wonderful—space or time?

*Ian* [*again sighting over his east and west lines.*

*Good-humouredly*]. Both are a little large for our approbation.

*Eloise* [*sitting on the steps and putting up the other braid*]. Do you know, Ian, that's the one thing about them I don't quite like. You can't get very intimate with them, can you? They make you so humble. That's one nice thing about a clock. A clock is sometimes wrong.

*Ian*. Don't you want to live in a first-hand relation to truth?

*Eloise*. Yes; yes, I do—generally.

*Ian*. I have a feeling as of having touched vast forces. To work directly with worlds—it lifts me out of that little routine of our lives, which is itself a clock.

*Eloise* [*catching his exultation*]. Let us *be* like this! Let us have done with clocks!

*Ian*. Eloise, how wonderful! Stop the clocks and live by the sundial? Live by the non-automatic sundial—as a pledge that we ourselves refuse to be automats!

*Eloise*. Like Alice Knight. [*She takes clock from dial and puts it face downward on the ground.*] I shall never again have anything to do with a clock!

*Ian*. Eloise! How corking of you! I didn't think you had it in you. [*Raising his right hand.*] Do you solemnly swear to live by the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

*Eloise* [*her hand upon the sundial*]. I swear.

*Ian*. Bring them!

*Eloise*. Bring—?

*Ian*. The clocks! Bring them! [*Seizes the spade over by the house; begins to dig a grave behind the sundial.*] Bring every one! We will bury the clocks before the sundial—an offering, a living sacrifice. I tell you this is *great*, Eloise. What is a clock? Something agreed upon and arbitrarily imposed upon us. Standard time. Not true time. Symbolizing the whole standardization of our lives. Clocks!

Why, it is clockiness that makes America mechanical and mean! Clock-minded! A clock is a little machine that shuts us out from the wonder of time. [*A large gesture with the shovel.*] Who thinks of spinning worlds when looking at a clock? How dare clocks do this to us? But the sundial—because there was creation, because there are worlds outside our world, because space is rhythm and time is flow that shadow falls precisely there and not elsewhere! Bring them, Eloise! I am digging the graves of the clocks!

*[Eloise, swept up by this ecstasy, yet frightened at what it is bringing her to, hesitates, then runs to house. Ian digs with rhythmic vigour. A moment later Eloise is seen peering down at him from window, in her arms a cuckoo clock. It begins to cuckoo, startling Eloise.]*

*Ian.* That confounded cuckoo!

*[A moment later Eloise comes out, bearing cuckoo clock and an old-fashioned clock. Ian's back is to her; she has to pass the alarm clock, lying where she left it, prone on the ground. She hesitates, then carefully holding the other two clocks in one arm, she stealthily goes rear and puts the alarm clock behind the sunflowers. Then advances with the other two.]*

*Ian* [*while digging*]. Into these graves go all that is clock-like in our own minds. All that a clock world has made of us lies buried here!

*[Eloise stands rather appalled at the idea of so much of herself going into a grave. Puts the old-fashioned clock carefully on the ground. Gingerly fits the cuckoo clock into the completed grave. With an exclamation of horror lifts it out of the grave. Listens to its tick. Puts her ear to the sundial; listens vainly.]*

*Eloise.* The sundial doesn't tick, does it, Ian?

*Ian.* Why should it tick?

Eloise. Do you know, Ian, I—[timidly] I like to hear the ticking of a clock. [No reply. Eloise holds up the cuckoo clock.] This was a wedding present.

Ian. No wonder marriage fails.

[He moves to take it from her.]

Eloise. I wonder if we hadn't better leave the cuckoo until to-morrow.

Ian. Flaming worlds! A cuckoo!

Eloise. Eddy and Alice gave us the cuckoo. You know they're coming back. I asked them for dinner. They might not understand our burying their clock.

Ian. Their failure to understand need not limit our lives.

[Puts the cuckoo clock in its grave and begins to cover it.]

Eloise [as the earth goes on]. I liked the cuckoo! I liked to see him popping out!

Ian [kindly]. You will grow, Eloise. You will go out to large things now that you have done with small ones.

Eloise. I hope so. It will be hard on me if I don't.

[Ian reaches for the other clock.]

Eloise [snatching it]. Oh, Ian, I don't think I ought to bury this one. It's the clock my grandmother started housekeeping with!

Ian [firmly taking clock]. And see what it did to her. Meticulous old woman! [Puts it in its grave.]

Eloise. You were glad enough to get her pies and buckwheat cakes.

Ian. She had all the small virtues. But a standardized mind. [Trampling down the grave.] She lacked scope. And now—a little grave for little clocks. [Takes out his watch, puts it in the grave.] Your watch, Eloise.

Eloise [holding to her wrist watch]. I thought I'd keep my watch, Ian. [Hastily.] For an ornament, you know.

Ian. We are going to let truth be your ornament, Eloise.

*Eloise.* Nobody sees truth. [*With a fresh outburst.*] This watch was my graduation present!

*Ian.* Symbolizing all the standardized arbitrary things you were taught! Commemorating the clock-like way your mind was made to run. Free yourself of that watch, *Eloise*. [*Eloise reluctantly frees herself. Ian briskly covers the watches. Moves to the unfilled grave.*] Is there nothing for this grave? [*Eloise shakes her head.*] Sure—the alarm clock!

*Eloise* [*running to the sunflowers and spreading out her skirts before them*]. Oh, *Ian*, not the alarm clock! How would we ever go to Boston? The train doesn't run by the sun.

*Ian.* Then the train is wrong.

*Eloise.* But, *Ian*, if the train is wrong we have to be wrong to catch the train.

*Ian.* That's civilization. [*Stands resolutely by the grave.*] The alarm clock, *Eloise*. The grave awaits it.

*Eloise* [*taking it up, her arms folded around it*]. I wanted to go to Boston and buy a hat!

*Ian.* The sun will fall upon your dear head and give you life.

*Eloise* [*about to cry*]. But no style! It ticks so loud and sure!

*Ian.* All false things are loud and sure.

*Eloise.* I need a tick! I am afraid of tickless time! [*Holding the clock in both hands she places it against her left ear.*]

*Ian* [*spade still in his right hand, he places his left arm around her reassuringly*]. You will grow, *Eloise*. You are growing.

[*He takes the clock as he is saying this. She turns her head backward, following the departing clock with surprised and helpless eyes. Disconsolately watches him bury it.*]

*Eloise* [*an inspiration*]. *Ian*! Couldn't you fix the sundial to be set and go off?

*Ian* [*pained*]. "Set and go off?" [*Pause; regards the sun.*] *Sine sole silio.*

*Eloise*. What did you say, Ian?

*Ian*. I said: *Sine sole silio.*

*Eloise*. Well, I don't know what you say when you say that.

*Ian*. It's a Latin motto I've just thought of for the sundial. It means, "Without sun, I am silent." Silence is a great virtue. [*Having finished the grave, he looks around, making sure there are no more clocks. Joyously.*] Now we are freed! *Eloise*, think what life is going to be! Done with approximations. Done with machine thinking. In a world content with false time, we are true.

*Eloise* [*sitting on the steps*]. Yes, it's beautiful. I want to be true. It's just that it's a little hard to be true in a false world. For instance, to-morrow I have an appointment with the dentist. If I come on sun-time I suppose I'll be twenty minutes—

*Ian* [*eagerly. Going to the sundial and pointing*]. If you will just let me explain this table— [*Eloise shrinks back. Ian gives it up.*] Oh, well, tell him you are living by the truth.

*Eloise*. I'm afraid he'll charge me for it. And when we ask people for dinner at seven, they'll get here at twenty minutes of seven. Or will it be twenty minutes after seven?

*Ian* [*smoothing down graves*]. It will be a part of eternal time.

*Eloise*. Yes—that's true. Only the roast isn't so eternal. Why do they have clocks wrong?

*Ian*. Oh, *Eloise*, I've explained it so many times. You—living in Provincetown, three hundred miles to the eastward, are living by the mean solar time of Philadelphia. [*Venomously.*] Do you want to live by the mean solar time of Philadelphia?

*Eloise*. Certainly not. [*An idea.*] Then has Philadelphia got the right time?

*Ian.* It's right six miles this side of Philadelphia.

*Eloise.* We might move to Philadelphia.

[*Enter through gate, Mrs. Stubbs, a Provincetown "native."*]

*Mrs. Stubbs.* Now, Mr. Joyce, this sun clock—is it running?

*Ian.* It doesn't "run," Mrs. Stubbs. It is acted upon.

*Mrs. Stubbs.* Oh. Well, is it being acted upon?

*Ian.* As surely as the sun shines.

*Mrs. Stubbs* [*looking at the sun*]. And it is shining to-day, isn't it? Well, will you tell me the time? My clock has stopped and I want to set it.

*Ian* [*happily*]. You hear, Eloise? Her clock has stopped.

*Mrs. Stubbs.* Yes, I forgot to wind it.

*Eloise* [*grieved to think of any one living in such a world*]. Wind it!

*Ian.* Do you not see, Mrs. Stubbs, where the shadow falls? [*She comes up the steps.*] From its millions of spinn—— You're in the way of the sun, Mrs. Stubbs. [*She steps aside.*] Its millions of spinning miles the sun casts that shadow, and here we know that it is eight minutes past six.

*Mrs. Stubbs.* Now, ain't that wonderful? Dear, dear, I wish Mr. Stubbs could make a sun clock. But he's not handy around the house. Past six. Well, I must hurry back. They work to-night at the cold storage, but Mr. Stubbs gets home for his supper at half-past six.

[*Starts away, reaching the gate.*]

*Eloise* [*running to her*]. Oh, Mrs. Stubbs! Don't get his supper by sun-time. It wouldn't be ready. It — [*With a hesitant look at Ian*] might get cold. [*Mrs. Stubbs stares.*] You see, Mr. Stubbs is coming home by the mean solar time of Philadelphia.

*Mrs. Stubbs* [*loyal to Mr. Stubbs*]. Who said he was?

*Eloise* [*in distress*]. Oh, it's all so false! And arbitrary!

[*To Ian.*] But I think Mrs. Stubbs had better be false and arbitrary too. Mr. Stubbs might rather have his supper than the truth

*Mrs. Stubbs* [*advancing a little*]. What is this about my being false? And—arbitrary?

*Eloise*. You see, you have to be, Mrs. Stubbs. We don't blame you. How can you live by the truth if Mr. Stubbs doesn't work by it?

*Mrs. Stubbs*. This is the first word I ever heard said against Johnnie Stubbs's way of freezin' fish

*Eloise*. Oh, Mrs. Stubbs, if it were *merely* his way of freezing fish!

*Ian*. Since you are not trying to establish a direct relation with truth, set your clock at five minutes of six. The clocks, as would be clear to you if you would establish a first-hand relation with this diagram, Eloise, are slow.

*Mrs. Stubbs*. You mean your sun clock's wrong.

*Ian*. All other clocks are wrong.

*Eloise*. You live by the mean solar time of Philadelphia.

*Mrs. Stubbs*. I do no such thing!

*Eloise*. Yes, you do, Mrs. Stubbs. You see the sun can't be both here and in Philadelphia at the same time. Now could it? So we have to pretend to be where it is in Philadelphia.

*Mrs. Stubbs*. Who said we did?

*Eloise*. Well [*after a look at Ian*] the Government.

*Mrs. Stubbs*. *Them* congressmen!

*Eloise*. But Mr. Joyce and I—— You're standing on a grave, Mrs. Stubbs. [*Mrs. Stubbs jumps.*] The grave of my grandmother's clock. [*In reply to Mrs. Stubbs's look of amazement.*] Oh yes! That clock has done harm enough. Mrs. Stubbs, think what time is—and then consider my grandmother's clock! Tick, tick! Tick, tick! Messing up eternity like that!



Mrs. Stubbs [after failing to think of anything adequate] I must get Mr. Stubbs his supper!

[Frightened exit.]

Ian [standing near house door]. Eloise, how I love you when feeling lifts you out of routine! Do you know, dearest, you are very sensitive in the way you feel feeling? Sometimes I think that to feel feeling is greater than to feel. You're like the dial. Your sensitiveness is the style—the gnomon—to cast the shadow of the feeling all around you and mark what has been felt.

[They embrace. Eddy and Alice open the gate.]

Eddy. Ahem! [He comes down.] Ahem! We seem to have come ahead of time.

Eloise. Oh, Eddy! Alice! [Moving toward Eddy but not passing the dial.] We are living by sun-time now. You haven't arrived for twenty minutes.

Eddy. We haven't arrived for twenty minutes? [Feeling himself.] Why do I seem to be here?

Alice [approaching dial]. So this is the famous sundial? How very interesting it is!

Eloise. It's more than that.

Alice. Yes, it's really beautiful, isn't it?

Eloise. It's more than that.

Eddy. Is it?

Eloise. It's a symbol. It means that Ian and I are done with approximations arbitrarily and falsely imposed upon us.

Eddy. Well, I should think you would be. Who's been doing that to you?

Eloise. Don't step on the graves, please, Alice.

Alice [starting back in horror]. Graves?

Eloise [pointing down]. The lies we inherited lie buried there.

Eddy. Well, I should think that might make quite a graveyard. So the sundial is built on lies.

Eloise. Indeed it is not!

Alice. Does it keep time?

*Ian.* It doesn't "keep" time. It gives it.

*Eddy* [*comparing with his watch*]. Well, it gives it wrong. It's twenty minutes fast.

[*Ian and Eloise smile at one another in a superior way.*]

*Alice.* You couldn't expect a home-made clock to be perfectly accurate. I think it's doing very well to come within twenty minutes of the true time.

*Ian.* It is true time.

*Eloise.* You think it's twenty minutes fast because your puny, meticulous little watch is twenty minutes slow.

*Alice.* Why, is it, Eddy? [*Comparing watches across the sundial.*] No, Eddy's watch is right by mine.

*Ian.* And neither of you is right by the truth.

*Eloise* [*pityingly*]. Don't you know that you are running by the mean solar time of Philadelphia?

*Eddy.* Well, isn't everybody else running that way?

*Eloise.* Does that make it right?

*Eddy.* I get you. You are going to cast off standard time and live by solar time.

*Eloise.* Lies for truth.

*Eddy.* But how are you going to connect up with other people?

*Ian.* We can allow for their mistakes.

*Eloise.* We will connect with other people in so far as other people are capable of connecting with the truth!

*Eddy.* I'm afraid you'll be awful lonesome sometimes.

*Alice.* But, Eloise, do you mean to say that you are going to insist on being right when other people are wrong?

*Eloise.* I insist upon it.

*Alice.* What a life!

*Eddy.* Come now, what difference does it make if we're wrong, if we're all wrong together?

*Ian.* That idea has made a clock of the human mind.

[*Enter Annie.*]

Annie. Mrs. Joyce, can't I have my clock back now ?  
I don't know when to start dinner.

Ian [*consulting dial*]. By true time, Annie, it is twenty minutes past six.

Eloise [*confidentially*]. By false time, it is six.

Annie. I have to have my kitchen clock back.

[*She looks around for it.*]

Ian. We are done with clocks, Annie.

Annie. You mean I'm *not* to have it back ?

Eloise. It lies buried there.

Annie. Buried ? My clock buried ? It's not *dead* !

Ian. It's dead to us, Annie.

Annie [*after looking at the grave*]. Do I get a new clock ?

Eloise. We are going to establish a first-hand relation with truth.

Annie. You can't cook without a clock.

Ian. A superstition. And anyway—have you not the sun ?

Annie [*after regarding the sun*]. I'd rather have a clock than the sun. [*Returns to her clockless kitchen.*]

Ian. That's what clocks have made of the human mind.

Eddy [*coming to Ian*]. Of course, this is all a joke.

Ian. The attempt to reach truth has always been thought a joke.

Eddy. But this isn't any new truth ! Why re-reach it ?

Ian. I'm reaching it myself. I'm getting the impact—as of a fresh truth.

Alice. But hasn't it all been worked out for us ?

Ian. And we take it never knowing—never *feeling*—what it is we take.

Eloise. And that has made us the mechanical things we are !

Annie [*frantically rushes in, peeling an onion*]. Starting the sauce for the spaghetti. Fry onions in butter three minutes.

[*Wildly regards sundial—traces curved line of diagram with knife. Looks despairingly at the sun. Tears back into house.*]

Ian. You get no sense of wonder in looking at a clock.

Alice. Yes, do you know, I do. I've always thought that clocks were perfectly wonderful. I never could understand how they could run like that.

Eloise. I suppose you know they run wrong?

Eddy. What do you mean "run wrong"?

Eloise. Why, you are running by the mean solar time of Philadelphia! And yet here you are in Provincetown, where the sun is a very different matter. You have no direct relation with the sun.

Eddy. That doesn't seem to worry me much.

Ian. No, it wouldn't worry you, Eddy. You're too perfect a product of a standardized world.

[*Eddy bows acknowledgment.*]

Annie [*rushing out to look at dial*]. Add meat, brown seven minutes.

[*Measures seven minutes between thumb and finger, holds up this fragment of time made visible and carries it carefully into the house.*]

Eddy. That girl'll get heart disease.

Ian. Let her establish a first-hand relation to heat. If she'd take a look at the food instead of the clock——

Eddy. Trouble is we have to establish a first-hand relation with the spaghetti. [*Eddy now comes down and regards the sundial. Moralizes.*] If other people have got the wrong dope, you've got to have the wrong dope or be an off ox.

Ian. Perfect product of a standardized nation!

Eddy [*pointing with his stick*]. What's this standardized snake?

Ian. That's my diagram correcting the sun.

Eddy. Does one correct the sun?

Eloise [*from behind the dial*]. Ian! Correcting the sun!

*Ian.* You see there are only four days in the year when the apparent time is the same as the average time.

*Eloise* [*in growing alarm*]. Do you mean to tell me the sun is not right with *itself*?

*Ian.* I've tried to explain it to you, Eloise, but you said you could get the feeling of it without understanding it. This curve [*pointing*] marks the variation. Here to-day, you see, the shadow is "right" as you call it—that is, average. It will be right again here in September, and again on December twenty-first.

*Alice.* My birthday!

*Eloise.* Ian, you mean to say the sun only tells the right *sun-time* four days in the year?

*Ian.* It always tells the "right" sun-time, but here the said right sun-time is fifteen minutes behind its own average, and here it is sixteen minutes ahead. This scale here across the bottom shows you the number of minutes to add or subtract.

*Eloise* [*with bitterness*]. Add! Subtract! Then you and your sun are false!

*Ian.* No, Eloise, not false. Merely intricate. Merely not regular. Machines are regular.

*Eloise.* You got me to bury the clocks and live by the sun—and now you tell me you have to *fix up* the sun.

*Ian.* It was you who said bury the clocks.

*Eloise.* I suppose you have to do something to the North star too!

*Ian.* Yes, the North star is not true north.

[*He starts to point out its error, sighting over the style of the dial.*]

*Eloise.* What is true? What is true?

*Ian* [*with vision*]. The mind of man.

*Eloise.* I think I'd better have a clock. [*A new gust.*] You told me I was to live by the sun, and now—after the clocks are in their graves—what I am to live by is *that snake*. [*She points at diagram.*]

*Ian.* You are a victim of misplaced confidence, Eloise. Sometimes when one feels things without understanding them one feels the wrong thing. But there's nothing to worry about. The sun and I can take care of the sun's irregularities.

*Eddy.* Take heart, Eloise. It's a standardized sun.

*Ian.* It's not a blindly accepted sun !

*Annie* [*who comes as one not to be put aside*]. What'll I do when it rains ?

*Ian.* You'll use your mind.

*Annie.* To tell time by ? [*Looking to Eloise*] I think I'd better find another place.

*Alice* [*coming forward, regarding this as a really serious matter*]. No, don't do that, Annie.

*Eloise* [*tearfully*]. You don't know the wonders of your own mind !

*Annie.* No, ma'am. [*After a look at the sun, becomes terrified.*] It's going down !

*Eddy.* Yes, it goes down.

*Annie.* How'll we tell time when it's dark ?

*Ian.* *Sine sole silio.*

*Annie.* Is that saying how we'll know when it's time to go to bed ?

*Ian.* The doves know when to go to bed.

*Annie.* The doves don't go to the pictures.

*Eloise* [*hysterically*]. You'll grow, Annie !

*Annie.* I'd rather have a clock ! [*Exit.*]

*Ian.* She'd rather have a clock than grow.

*Alice.* Now why can't one do both ?

*Ian.* One doesn't—that's the answer. One merely has the clock. I'd rather be a fool than a machine.

*Eddy.* I never definitely elected to be either.

*Ian.* One can be both without electing either.

*Eloise.* I want to hear the ticking of a clock !

*Eddy.* It's a nice thing to hear. The ticking of a clock means the minds of many men. As long as the mind of man has to—fix up the facts of nature in order

to create ideal time I feel it's a little more substantial to have the minds of many men.

*Alice.* As I've told you before, Eloise, you can't do better than accept the things that have been all worked out for you.

*Ian.* You hear them, Eloise? You see where this defence of clocks is leading?

*Eloise.* Ian, I'm terribly worried—and a little hurt—about the sun. [*As one beginning a dirge.*] The sun has failed me. The North star is false.

*Ian* [*going to her*]. I am here, dearest.

*Eloise.* Sometimes you seem so much like space. I am running by the sun—that wobbly sun [*looking at it*], and every one else is running by Philadelphia. I want a little clock to tick to me!

*Ian.* You will grow, dearest.

*Eloise.* There's no use growing. The things you grow to are wrong. [*Pressing her hands to her head.*] I need a tick in time!

*Ian* [*striding savagely from her*]. Very well, then; dig up the clocks.

*Eddy.* Now you're talking! [*Eloise springs up.*]

*Ian.* Dig up the clocks! And we spend our lives nineteen minutes and twenty seconds apart!

[*Eloise is arrested, appalled. Dreadful pause.*]

*Eloise.* You mean we'd never get together?

*Ian.* Time would lie between us. I refuse to be recaught into a clock world. It was you, Eloise, who proposed we give up the clocks and live in this first-hand relation to truth.

*Eloise.* I didn't know I was proposing a first-hand relation with that snake!

*Ian.* It's not a snake! It's a little piece of the long winding road to truth. It's the discarding of error, the adjustment of fact. And I did it myself. And it puts me *on* that road. Oh, I know [*to Eddy and Alice*] how you can laugh if you yourself feel no need to *feel* truth. And you, Eloise, if you don't want to

feel time—return to your mean little clock. What is a clock? A clock is the soulless——

*[The alarm clock enters a protest. Smothered sound of the alarm going off underground. Eloise screams.]*

Eloise. The alarm clock! It's going off!

Alice. Buried alive!

Eloise. Oh no—oh no! How terrible! Ian, how terrible!

*[She runs to him. Alarm clock, being intermittent, goes off again.]*

Ian. Eloise, if you listen to the voice of that clock——

Eddy. How bravely it tries to function in its grave!

Alice. The death struggle—the last gasp!

*[With another scream Eloise snatches spade, begins to dig; alarm clock gives another little gasp; spade is too slow for her; in her desperation goes to it with her hands. Gets it and, as she holds it aloft, the alarm clock rings its triumph.]*

Eloise *[holding it to her ear]*. It's ticking! It ticks! It ticks! Oh, it's good to hear the ticking of a clock!

*[As he hears this, Ian, after a moment of terrible silence, goes and unscrews the plate of the sundial. All watch him, afraid to speak. He takes it off, holds it above the grave from which the alarm clock has been rescued.]*

Eloise. Ian! What are you doing? *[He does not answer, but puts the sundial in the alarm clock's grave.]*

Ian! No! No! Not that! Not your beautiful sundial! Oh no! Not that!

*[Ian, having finished the burial of the sundial, sees the alarm clock and puts it on the pedestal from which the sundial has been taken.]*

Ian. We bow down, as of old, to the mechanical. We will have no other god but it.

*[He then sits on the step, sunk in gloom. Annie appears, in her hand a panful of water.]*



Annie. This liver has to soak five minutes. I'll soak it here. [*Sees the alarm clock ; with a cry of joy*] My clock! My clock! [*Overcome with emotion.*] Oh! My clock! My clock! Can I take it in the house to finish dinner?

Eloise [*in a hopeless voice*]. Yes, take it away.

[*Beaming, Annie bears it to the kitchen. Eloise now kneels behind the grave of the sundial.*]

Eddy. Let us leave them alone with their dead.

[*Leads Alice to the corner of the house ; they look off down the road. Eloise and Ian sit there on either side of the grave, swaying a little back and forth, as those who mourn.*]

Eloise [*looking at grave*]. I had thought life was going to be so beautiful

Ian. It might have been.

Eloise [*looking at empty pedestal*]. I suppose it will never be beautiful again.

Ian. It cannot be beautiful again.

[*Suddenly, with a cry, Eloise gets up and darts to the house : comes racing back with the alarm clock, snatches spade, desperately begins to dig a grave.*]

Eloise. Ian! Ian! Don't you see what I'm doing? I'm willing to have a first-hand relation with the sun even though it's not regular.

[*But Ian is as one who has lost hope. Eddy and Alice turn to watch the reburial of the alarm clock. Annie strides in.*]

Annie [*in no mood for feeling*]. Where's my alarm clock?

Eloise. I am burying it.

Annie. Again? [*Looks at sundial.*] And even the sun-clock's gone!

Eddy. All is buried. Truth. Error. We have returned to the nothing from which we came.

Annie. This settles it. Now I go. I leave.

[*Firm with purpose re-enters the house.*]

Alice [*excitedly*]. Eloise! She means it!

Eloise [*dully*]. I suppose she does.

[*Continues her gravedigging*

Alice. But you can't get anybody else! You can get anybody now. Oh, this is madness! What does any of the rest of it matter if you have lost your cook [*To Ian.*] Eloise can't do the work! Peel potatoes—scrub. What's the difference what's true if you have to clean out your own sink? [*Despairing of his she turns to Eloise.*] Eloise, stop fussing about the moon and stars! You're losing your cook!

[*Annie comes from the house with suitcase, shawl strap, and hand-bag on long strings. Marches straight to left of stage, makes a face at the sun marches to gate, left rear, and off.*]

Alice. Eddy, go after her! Heavens! Has no one a mind? Go after her!

Eddy. What's the good of going after her without a clock?

Alice. Well, get a clock! For heaven's sake, get a clock! Eloise, get off the grave of the alarm clock [*Eloise stands like a monument. To Eddy.*] Well there are graves all around you. Dig something else up. No! You call her back. I'll—

[*Snatches spade, which is resting against sundial pedestal, begins to dig. Eddy stands at back, calling.*

Eddy. Annie! Oh, Annie! Wait, Annie!

Alice [*while frantically digging*]. Say something to interest her, imbecile!

Eddy [*stick in hand, straw hat in the other, making wild signals with both*]. Come home, Annie! Clock! Clock! [*Giving up that job and throwing off his coat.* You interest her and I'll dig. [*They change places.*

Alice. She's most to the bend! Eddy, don't you know how to dig?

[*Eddy, who has been digging with speed and skill produces the clock with which Eloise's grandmother started housekeeping. Starts to dash off with it.*]

Eloise [*dully*]. That clock doesn't keep time. Annie hates it.

Ian [*as if irritated by all this inefficiency*]. What she wants is the alarm clock. Get off the grave, Eloise.

[*He disinters alarm clock and with it runs after Annie.*

*Alice draws a long breath and rubs her back.*

*Eddy brings the clock he dug up and sets it on the pedestal. Then he looks down at the disturbed graves ]*

Eddy. Here's a watch! [*Lifts it from the grave ; holds it out to Eloise ; she does not take it. He puts it on the pedestal beside the clock.*] Here's another watch. [*Holds up Ian's watch.*] Quite a valuable piece of ground.

[*Now is heard the smothered voice of a cuckoo.*]

Alice [*jumping*]. What's that ?

Eloise. The cuckoo. I suppose it's lonesome.

Alice [*outraged*]. Cuckoo! [*Pointing.*] In that grave? The cuckoo we gave you? [*Eloise nods.*] You buried our wedding present? [*Eloise again nods. Eddy and Alice draw together in indignation.*] Well, I must say, the people who try to lead the right kind of lives *always* do the wrong thing. [*Stiffly.*] I am not accustomed to having my wedding presents put in graves. Will you please dig it up, Eddy? It will do very well on the mantel in our library. And my back nearly broken digging for your cook!

[*She holds her back. While Eddy is digging up the cuckoo, Annie and Ian appear and march across from gate to house, Annie triumphantly bearing her alarm clock, Ian—a captive at her chariot wheels—following with suitcase, shawl-strap, and long strings of bag around his wrist. A moment later Ian comes out of the house, looks at each dug-up thing, stands by the grave of the sundial. Enter Mrs. Stubbs.*]

Mrs. Stubbs. Oh, Mr. Joyce, I've come to see your sun-clock again. Mr. Stubbs says *he'll* not be run

from Philadelphia. He says if you have got the time straight from the sun—— [*Sees that the sundial is gone.*] Oh, do you take it in at night?

*Ian.* The sundial lies buried there.

*Mrs. Stubbs.* You've *buried* the sun-clock? And dug up all the *wrong* clocks? [*With a withering glance at Eloise.*] That's how a smart man's appreciated! What did you bury it for, Mr. Joyce?

[*Eddy gives the cuckoo clock to Alice.*]

*Ian.* It cannot live in this world where no one wants truth or feeling about truth. This is a world for clocks.

*Mrs. Stubbs.* Well, *I* want truth! And so does Johnnie Stubbs! If you'll excuse my saying so, Mr. Joyce, after you've made a thing that's right you oughtn't to bury it, even if there is nobody to want it. And now that *I* want it—— [*Mrs. Stubbs takes the spade and begins to dig up the sundial. Ian cannot resist this and helps her. He lifts the sundial, she brushes it off and he fits it to its place on the pedestal.*] Now there it is, Mr. Joyce, and as good as if it had never seen the grave. [*She looks at the setting sun.*] And there's time for it to make its shadow before this sun has gone.

*Ian.* The simple mind has beauty.

*Eloise* [*coming to him*]. I want to be simpler.

*Mrs. Stubbs.* Now what time would you say it was, Mr. Joyce?

*Ian.* I would say it was twenty minutes of seven, Mrs. Stubbs.

*Mrs. Stubbs* [*looking at Eddy and Alice and the cuckoo clock*]. And they would say it was twenty minutes past six! Well, *I* say: let them that want sun-time have sun-time and them that want tick-time have tick-time. [*Annie appears at the door.*]

*Annie* [*in a flat voice*]. It's dinner-time!

$X = o :$   
A NIGHT OF THE TROJAN WAR  
BY JOHN DRINKWATER

## CHARACTERS

PRONAX,	}	<i>Greeks.</i>
SALVIUS,		
ILUS,	}	<i>Trojans.</i>
CAPYS,		
A GREEK SENTINEL.		
A GREEK SERVANT.		

The action passes between a Greek tent and the Trojan walls, and is continuous.

*X=0: A Night of the Trojan War*, was first produced at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, on Saturday, April 14, 1917, under the direction of the author, with the following cast:

PRONAX	.	.	.	.	.	.	Felix Aylmer
SALVIUS.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Nicholas Bly
ILUS	.	.	.	.	.	.	Joseph A. Dodd.
CAPYS	.	.	.	.	.	.	William J. Rea.
A GREEK SENTINEL	.	.	.	.	.	.	Alfred J. Brooks.
A GREEK SERVANT	.	.	.	.	.	.	Richard Wayne

The setting was devised by Frank D. Clewlow

Commentary, page 208. Acting Notes, page 243.

$X = 0 :$

## A NIGHT OF THE TROJAN WAR

### SCENE I

*A Grecian tent on the Plain before Troy, towards the end of the ten years' war. It is a starry summer night. Pronax and Salvius, two young Greek soldiers, are in a tent, Salvius reading by a lighted torch, Pronax watching the night. During the scene a Sentinel passes at intervals to and fro behind the tent.*

*Pronax.* So is the night often at home. I have seen  
White orchards brighten under a summer moon,  
As now these tents under the stars. This hour  
My father's coppices are full of song,  
While sleep is on the comfortable house—  
Unless one dear one wakes to think of me  
And count my chances when the Trojan death  
Goes on its nightly errand. [*The Sentinel passes.*]

It's a dear home,  
And fragrant, and there's blessed fruit and corn,  
And thoughts that make me older than my youth  
Come even from the nettles at the gate.  
To-day, perhaps, the harvesters are out,  
And on the night is the ripe pollen blown . . .  
And this is the third harvest that has gone  
While we have wasted on a barren plain  
To avenge some wrong done in our babyhood  
On beauty that we have not seen. Three years . . .  
But so it is, and so it must be done,

Till the Greek oath is proven. Salvius,  
Why is all lovely thought a pain ?

*Salvius.* We know  
Even upon the flood of adoration,  
That beauty passes. That's the tragic tale  
That is our world.

*Pronax.* Is it not very strange  
That, prisoned in this quarrel so long and long,  
Until to remember a little Argive street  
Is torture to the bone, yet there is now  
Nothing of hatred in the blood for them  
Whose death is all our daily use, but merely  
Consent in death, knowing that death may strike  
Across our tongues as lightly as those that lie  
For ever dumb because we might not spare.

*Salvius.* Not strange ; who goes in company with  
death,  
Watching his daily desolation, thinking,  
On every stroke, of all the agony  
That from that stroke goes throbbing, throbbing,  
throbbing,  
Forgets all hate. How should we hate the dead ?  
And, where death ranges as among us now,  
You, Pronax, I, and our antagonists  
And friends alike are all but as dead men

[*The Sentinel passes.*]  
Moving together in a ghostly world,  
With life a luckless beggar at the door.  
It is not ours to hate, who have all put by  
That safety where men think eternity  
Immeasurably far, and leisured passions have  
Their corry breeding place. Great kings may hate,  
And priests may thunder hate, and grey-beard  
prophets

May cry again to those who cry their hate  
In pride of their new-found authority,  
Fearing lest love should mark them as they are,  
And send them barren from their brutal thrift.



But not for us this envy    It is ours  
Merely to die, or give the death that these  
Out of their hatred or indifference will.

*Pronax.* It's not that a man grows tardy in his  
duty . . .

It's still a glad thing to do as the motherland bids,  
Though the blind soul forgets how sprang the cause.  
I shall die in my hour, though it should come to-day,  
Not grudging. Yet it is bitterness for youth,  
When nothing should be but scrutiny of life,  
Mating, and building towards a durable fame,  
And setting the hearthstone trim for a lover's cares,  
To let all knowledge of these things go, and learn  
Only of death, that should be hidden from youth,  
A great thing biding upon the fullness of age,  
And not made common gossip among these tides  
Of daily beastliness. And still I must remember,  
For all I have renounced my thronging life,  
My orchards, and my rivers, and the bells  
Of twilight cattle moving in the mist.

*Salvius.* I know ; the mind grows faint with think-  
ing of them—

Those little, lovely things of home. My bed  
Looks to the west on the Ionian sea—  
A sweet, fresh-smelling room it is. I wrote  
My rightest poems there. I cannot see  
A sail now coming Troyward but my brain  
Is sick for that small room, above the quay  
Where sailors laugh at dawn and all day long,  
Until the silent sunset ships go out  
Into Sicilian waters.

*Pronax.* There your poems  
Were made, in Pylos ; and in Athens I  
Too dreamed, although I caught no lyric song—  
I envy you your song ;—I was to build  
A cleaner state ; I dreamed a policy  
Purer than states have known ; I was to bring  
Princedom to every hearth, to every man

Knowledge that he was master of his fate.  
The dream is dulled. Three years of Trojan dust  
Have taught me but to pray at night for sleep,  
And an arm stronger in cunning than my foe's,  
A quicker eye to parry death. And, Salvius,  
What of your songs ?

*Salvius.* Asleep these many days,  
Biding their happy time if that should be.

*Pronax.* And death is watching,  
[*The Sentinel passes.*]

and your song, that grew  
In the womb of generations for the use  
And joy of men, may perish ere it takes  
Its larger music, that the tale may go  
That Greece drove bloodier war than Ilium ;  
That's a poor bargain. . . . But these thoughts that  
stir

Like ghosts out of a life that should have been,  
Neglect my duty. It is past the hour  
I should be nosing along the Trojan wall  
To catch what prey may be. I have scarred the wall  
At the bend there where I told you, in the breaking  
stone,

These many nights, until at last I've made  
A foothold to the top. It's a queer game,  
This tripping of life suddenly in the dark,  
This blasting of flesh that is wholesome yet in the  
blood,

And those who weep, I think, are as those would weep  
If I should fall. I loathe it ; but, good-night ;  
You should sleep ; it is late, and it is your guard at  
dawn.

[*He is arming himself, and wrapping himself in his  
cloak.*]

Good-night. What are you reading ?

*Salvius.* Songs that one  
Made in my province. The sails are in his song,  
And seabirds, and our level pasturelands,

And the bronzed fishers on the flowing tides.  
His name was Creon. I will make such songs  
If the years will.

*Pronax* [*who has poured himself out and drunk a cup  
of wine*]. I know. Put out the torch  
If you're abed before I come. Good-night.

*Salvius*. Good-night : good luck.

*Pronax*. And will you bid them fill  
The trough ; this business may make bloody hands.  
[*He looks out into the night, and goes.*]  
[*The Sentinel passes.*]

*Salvius* [*reading*]. Upon the dark Sicilian waves,  
The casting fishers go . . .

*The Curtain falls.*

## SCENE II

*On Troy wall. Capys, a young Trojan soldier, is on guard, looking out over the plain where the Greeks are encamped. Ilus, another young soldier, his friend, wearing a bearskin, comes to him.*

*Ilus*. When does your watch end ?

*Capys*. In two hours ; at midnight.

*Ilus*. They're beautiful, those tents, under the stars.  
It is my night to go like a shadow among them,  
And, snatching a Greek life, come like a shadow again.  
It's an odd skill to have won in the rose of your youth—  
Two years, and once in seven days—a hundred,  
More than a hundred, and only once a fault.  
A hundred Greek boys, Capys, like myself—  
Loving, and quick in honour, and clean of fear—  
Spoiled in their beauty by me whose desire is beauty  
Since first I walked the April hedgerows. Would time  
But work upon this Helen's face, maybe  
This nine-year quarrel would be done, and Troy

Grow sane, and her confounding councillors  
Be given carts to clean and drive to market.  
What of your sea-girl? Has she grown?

*Capys.*

You ask

Always the question, friend. The chisels rust,  
The moths are in my linen coats, my mallets  
Are broken. Ilus, in my brain were limbs  
Supple and mighty; the beauty of women moved  
To miraculous birth in my imagining;  
I had conceived the body of man, to make  
Divine articulation of the joy  
That flows uncounted in every happy step  
Of health; the folk faring about Troy streets  
Should have flowered upon my marble marvellously  
I would have given my land a revelation  
Sweet as the making of it had been to me,  
And still it shall be, if ever from my mind  
Falls this obscure monotony, that makes  
The world an echo, its vivid gesture gone.  
Troy peaceful shall be Troy magnificent,  
For I will make her so.

*Ilus.*

It would be grand  
If Troy would use us as we might be used,  
To build and sing and make her market-places  
Honest, and show her people that all evil  
Is the lethargic mind. I have seen this Troy  
Bloom in my thought into a simple state  
Where jealousy was dead because no man spoke  
Out of his vanity of the thing he knew not.  
*Capys*, it is so little that is needed  
For righteousness; we are all so truly made,  
If only to our making we were true.  
Why should we fight these Greeks? There was some  
    anger,  
Some generous heat of the blood those years ago  
When Paris brought his Helen into Troy  
With Menelaus screaming at his heels;  
But that's forgotten now, and none can stay

This thing that none would have endure. I have  
thought

Often, upon those nights when I have gone  
Fatally through the Grecian tents, how well  
Might he whose life I stole and I have thriven  
Together conspiring this or that of good  
For all men, and I have sickened, and gone on  
To strike again as Troy has bidden me,  
For an oath is a queer weevil in the brain.

*Capys.* Who's there ?

*A Voice.* Troy and the Trojan death.

*Capys.* Pass Troy.

It is still upon the plains to-night, and the stars  
Are a lantern light against you—you must go  
Warily, *Ilus*. The loss of many friends  
Has sharpened my love, not dulled me against loss.  
I am careful for you to-night in all this beauty  
Of glowing summer—disaster might choose this night  
So brutally, and so disaster likes.  
Go warily.

*Ilus.* I know the tented squares  
And every lane among the Greeks, as I know  
The walls of Troy ; and I can pass at night  
Within an handshot of a watching eye,  
And be but a shadow of cloud or a windy bush.  
A hundred times, remember.

*Capys.* Yet would I could come  
To take your danger or share it.

*Ilus.* No ; there's a use  
That's more than courage in this. And, *Capys*, yet  
Those chisels must win your vision into form  
For the world's light and ease. It's an ill day  
Among ill days that smites the seer's lips.  
Your work's to do.

*Capys.* And yours—that dream of Troy  
Regenerate, with the heart of the people shown  
In the people's life, not lamentably hurt  
By men who, mazed with authority, put by

Authority's proper use, and so are evil,  
While still the folk under their tyranny keep  
Their kindness, waiting upon deliverance.  
So may we come together to our work,  
In prophecy you of life, creation I.  
How long to-night ?

*Ilus.* Before your watch is done  
I shall be back. Here at this point, before  
The night is full ; throw me the rope upon  
The signal, thus—

*[He whistles. He is climbing over the parapet, to which he has hooked a rope.]*

Peace with you till I come.

*Capys.* And luck with you. Go warily. Farewell.  
*[Ilus drops down to the plain below. Capys draws the rope up. There is silence for a moment.]*

*Capys* *[moving to and fro along the wall]*.

Or Greek or Trojan, all is one  
When snow falls on our summertime,  
And when the happy noonday rhyme  
Because of death is left undone.

The bud that breaks must surely pass.  
Yet is the bud more sure of May  
Than youth of age, when every day  
Death is youth's shadow in the glass.

*[A hand is seen groping on the parapet. Pronax, looking cautiously along the wall, draws himself up silently, unseen by Capys, who continues.]*

Beside us ever moves a hand,  
Unseen, of deadly stroke, and when  
It falls on youth—

*[He hears the movement behind him, and turns swiftly.]*

Who's there ?

*Pronax* *[rushing upon him]*. A Greek unlucky to  
Trojan arms—

A sworn Greek, terrible in obedience.

[His onslaught has overwhelmed Capys, who falls without a cry, the Greek's dagger in his breast. Pronax draws it out, looks at his dead antagonist, shudders, peers out over the wall, and very carefully climbs down at the point where he came.]

*The Curtain falls.*

### SCENE III

*The Greek tent again. Salvius is still reading, and the torch burning. A Servant brings a large jar of water, which he pours into the trough outside the tent. He goes with the jar, and a moment later the Sentinel passes behind the tent. There is silence for a few moments, Salvius turning the pages of his book. Then, from the shadow in front of the tent, Ilus in his bearskin is seen stealthily approaching. He reaches the tent opening without a sound, and in the same unbroken silence his dagger is in the Greek's heart. Ilus catches the dead man as he falls, and lets his body sink on to one of the couches inside the tent. The Sentinel passes. Ilus, breathless, waits till the steps have gone, and then, stealthily as he came, disappears.*

*There is a pause. Pronax comes out of the darkness, and, throwing his cloak on the ground, goes straight to the trough, and begins to wash his hands.*

*Pronax. What, still awake, and reading? These are rare songs,*

*To keep a soldier out of his bed at night.*

*Ugh—Salvius, sometimes it's horrible—*

*He had no time for a word—he walked those walls*

*Under the stars as a lover might walk a garden*

*Among the moonlit roses—this cleansing's good—*

*He was saying some verses, I think, till death broke in.*

Cold water's good after this pitiful doing,  
And freshens the mind for comfortable sleep.  
Well, there, it's done, and sleep's a mighty curer  
For all vexations.

[*The Sentinel passes.*]

It's time that torch was out—  
I do not need it, and you should be abed . . .  
Salvius . . .

[*He looks into the tent for the first time.*]

What, sleeping, and still dressed ?  
That's careless, friend, and the torch alight still . . .

Salvius . . .

Salvius, I say . . . gods ! . . . what, friend . . .

Salvius, Salvius . . .

Dead . . . it is done . . . it is done . . . there  
is judgment made . . .

Beauty is broken . . . and there on the Trojan wall  
One too shall come . . . one too shall come . . .

[*The Sentinel passes.*]

*The Curtain falls.*

#### SCENE IV

*The Trojan wall. The body of Capys lies in the starlight and silence. After a few moments the signal comes from Ilus below. There is a pause. The signal is repeated. There is a pause.*

*The Curtain falls.*



# ELIZABETH REFUSES

A MINIATURE COMEDY FROM JANE AUSTEN'S  
"PRIDE AND PREJUDICE"

BY MARGARET MACNAMARA

## CHARACTERS

ELIZABETH BENNET.

JANE BENNET.

MRS. BENNET, *their mother*.

MR. COLLINS.

LADY CATHERINE DE BOURGH.

Costumes of the end of the eighteenth century. *Pride and Prejudice* was written between October 1796 and August 1797, but was not published till 1813. Dresses of the early nineteenth century would not be unsuitable, but they should fall within the period of high waists and narrow skirts.—M. M.

Commentary, page 210. Acting Notes and Stage Plan, page 245.

## ELIZABETH REFUSES

SCENE.—*The Morning-room at the Bennets'.*

[ELIZABETH enters from the library, armed with a large, serious-looking book. With an air of resolution she sits down in the armchair and starts to read. But, before she has found her place, she lapses into sad thought.

*The entrance of JANE, also armed with a book from the library, spurs her to assiduous reading. JANE sits and opens her book, but notices that her sister is wiping away a tear, and is about to utter her sympathy when the appearance of MRS. BENNET—from the hall—brings both girls to their feet—such was the deference paid to elders in Jane Austen's days.]*

*Mrs. Bennet* [fretfully]. What are you at, you girls?  
[*They show their books, and she continues.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* I should think you might find some more agreeable occupation, when you know my nerves are all upset.

[*She drops into the armchair Elizabeth offers.*]

*Jane.* Can I fetch you anything, mamma? Your smelling-salts?

*Elizabeth.* A fan?

*Mrs. Bennet.* Don't be fidgety, girls. Sit down, do.  
[*Pause.*] It was bad enough to look forward to your father's death with the certainty that we should be turned out of house and home! To be forced to

receive the heir as our guest, and entertain him for untold ages !

[*Elizabeth is on the settee, Jane in chair 1.*]

*Elizabeth.* A clergyman's week, mamma.

*Jane.* Ten days are passed.

[*Elizabeth's manner has a touch of rebuke, Jane's is purely sympathetic.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* I wonder Mr. Collins had the impertinence to ask for an invitation ! We didn't want to make up the family quarrel. He comes here—a perfect stranger—all hypocrisy—professing his goodwill—and eyeing every piece of furniture as if he were to inherit it of right, instead of by that monstrous entail.

*Elizabeth.* But, mamma, Mr. Collins *has* the right—"entail" merely means that the inheritance is in the male line. If one of us had been a boy—

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, la, Lizzy, your father has explained the entail to me a thousand times. But that makes no difference ! It's an iniquitous affair—and he ought to have done something about it, instead of leaving me a widow with five daughters, and not a penny to support them beyond the two hundred a year he got with me !

*Jane* [*very gently*]. Mamma, may we not find comfort in the fact that dear papa is in excellent health, and but fifty years of age ?

*Mrs. Bennet.* Don't nag at me, Jane ! I hate the sight of Mr. Collins ! He's walking round the park now, hugging himself at the thought that it will soon be his—and not the least ashamed of the entail !

*Elizabeth.* We have no liking for Mr. Collins, mamma, but if only you would try to understand that the entail is as lawful as—

*Mrs. Bennet* [*interrupting on "is"*]. Don't dare to teach me, Lizzy ! A nice reward for sparing you for a long visit to your aunt and uncle ! Ungrateful girl ! I looked for a very different outcome of your holiday.

But young men seem to be as scarce in other neighbourhoods as they are round us. In all the while you were away from home, did you receive one eligible offer?

*Elizabeth.* N-no.

[*The hesitation is lost upon Mrs. Bennet, who expected "No," but Jane is astonished.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* I never supposed you would! There's not one of you in the way of obtaining a husband except Jane. She's my sole consolation. As I was saying the other day, to Lady Lucas, "Jane is provided for. We shall soon see Jane keeping house in the handsomest mansion in this part of the country."

*Jane* [*rising*]. Dear mamma, I have no such expectation!—at least——

[*Jane slips away towards chair 2.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, Jane, what an untruth! Isn't he forever at your side? Didn't he offend Lady Lucas's daughter by dancing four times with you, and never once asking her? Tell me that, miss!

*Elizabeth.* Mamma, we may guess at intentions—I think them obvious—but to have them spoken of—especially outside the family—it distresses Jane unspeakably!

*Mrs. Bennet.* So I'm to ask your leave to speak, am I? [*Going.*] I'll not stay here to be sauced!

*Elizabeth* [*rising towards her*]. I beg your pardon, mamma, I didn't——

*Jane.* Believe me, mamma, I know it is in kindness——

*Mrs. Bennet* [*with an air of dignity*]. Stand aside, both of you! I am going to the housekeeper's room, to give the morning's orders. [*Dropping her dignity for querulous complaint.*] They ought to have been done an hour ago, but my poor nerves are in such a flutter——

[*She pauses.*]

*Jane.* Might I give the orders for you, mamma?

*Mrs. Bennet* [*dignified again*]. No, I thank you! I don't want any interference in *my* house. If you want to please your mother, take a little more pains to get an establishment of your own. I *can't* provide for you when we are all thrown out-of-doors by that wicked, wicked entail!

[*She has talked herself off into the hall.*]

*Jane* [*ruefully*]. Mamma means so well by us!

*Elizabeth* [*moving down left, not looking at Jane*]. I have the advantage over you in one thing, Jane—she knows nothing of my unfortunate affairs.

*Jane* [*centre*]. It was awkward for you that she asked whether you had received an eligible offer.

*Elizabeth* [*turning*]. Why “awkward”?

*Jane.* Mr. Darcy is very handsome, very rich, and of high birth and breeding. His station is much above ours.

*Elizabeth* [*sitting in chair 2*]. At the time I did not think him eligible in character.

*Jane.* Oh, I ought to have understood! You rejected Mr. Darcy because you did not love him.

*Elizabeth* [*looking away from Jane, over audience*]. I rejected him because I was foolishly prejudiced by that lying tale in which he figured as mean, disloyal, revengeful! Now I have the satisfaction of knowing that I refused the most generous and upright of men.

*Jane* [*behind Elizabeth's right shoulder*]. Poor Lizzy! But—in the circumstances—would it not be wise to remember your own early impressions of his character? [*Moves away to centre, then looks at Elizabeth.*] Before that false report reached your ears I have heard you speak strongly against his pride.

[*Elizabeth can find no answer.*]

*Jane* [*after a slight pause, crosses and sits on settee*]. Ah, well, perhaps Mr. Darcy may renew his proposal.

*Elizabeth* [*energetically*]. Never! He *is* proud! He said himself, he loved me against his will. *Once*

love conquered pride, and he stooped to a woman beneath him in social standing. *Twice*, is unthinkable.

[*Mrs. Bennet returns, talking.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Girls! Here is Mr. Collins back from his walk already! You must entertain him! My nerves are not equal to a single word!

[*Sits on settee, flopping over its back. Jane and Elizabeth shoot to their feet on the word "Girls." Jane crosses to Elizabeth. Mr. Collins bows in the entrance.*]

*Mr. Collins.* If I may be pardoned the intrusion, dear ladies, I should be gratified by permission to sit in your company.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, la, Mr. Collins, you are welcome to sit here and chat, but you must excuse *me* from taking any part. I have the headache.

[*He bows and advances.*]

*Jane* [*standing by armchair*]. Won't you be seated, Mr Collins?

[*Pointing to chair 1, Jane retires to chair 2; Elizabeth is on the ottoman*]

*Mr. Collins* [*bowing*]. I thank you! I thank you sincerely! [*He bows, fetches chair 1, and sits centre.*] I am always glad to converse with ladies. [*He clears his throat.*] Your father, my dear cousins, has just informed me of a very surprising circumstance. He is acquainted—I understand the family is acquainted—with Mr. Darcy, who is the nephew of my patroness, Lady Catherine De Bourgh. It seems that Mr. Darcy has stayed in this neighbourhood!

*Mrs. Bennet.* I've no opinion of Mr. Darcy. He showed himself far too high and mighty to please my daughters. If he is your Lady Catherine's nephew, I hope she has better manners than him.

*Mr. Collins* [*shocked*]. Lady Catherine's manners are beyond anything I can describe!

*Mrs. Bennet.* Mr. Darcy is a very stuck-up young man.

*Mr. Collins.* He is a man of large fortune. As my cousins have the honour of acquaintance with the gentleman, they will be interested to hear of his approaching marriage.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, I'm sick and tired of hearing of young men's marriages! But who is it to?

*Mr. Collins.* To his cousin, Lady Catherine's only child and heiress.

*Mrs. Bennet* [*grudgingly*]. Very suitable, I daresay.

*Jane.* May I ask—is the engagement recent?

*Mr. Collins.* To be precise, the engagement is not yet definite, but Lady Catherine assures me that she intends the match.

[*Mrs. Bennet yawns; Jane presses Elizabeth's hand.*]

*Mr. Collins* [*after a slight pause*]. You inquired concerning Lady Catherine's manners. Briefly, they are those of a woman whom one cannot regard with too much deference. Some reckon her proud, but I have never seen anything but affability in her character. Occasionally I am honoured by a request to make up her game of cards in the evening. Frequently she will stop her carriage at the gate of the valuable rectory she bestowed upon me, and summon me to receive her advice upon the management of my property or the parish. The minutest concerns of *all* her neighbours are of interest to Lady Catherine. She has even condescended to advise me to marry. On that topic, however, I do not propose to enlarge until Mrs. Bennet is relieved of her headache, and an opportunity arises of broaching it in private.

*Mrs. Bennet* [*excited*]. What do you say, sir? Girls, it is high time you took the air! Go out for a walk!

[*They rise; so does Mr. Collins.*]

*Mr. Collins* [*bowing*]. I should be gratified if they would honour me—that is to say—if Miss *Jane* would honour me by remaining within call.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, as for *Jane*—but that does not signify—[*rises*] I will explain. You had better both



remain within call. [*Crossing to them.*] Go into the library—your father won't mind.

[*They curtsy to her and go. Mr. Collins moves up as if to open the door, putting the chair away as he goes. They incline their heads to his bow.*]

Mrs. Bennet. Pray be seated, Mr. Collins. Take the settee.

[*With a bow, he seats himself in the middle of it, bulking large.*]

Mr. Collins. If your headache is not too severe, dear Mrs. Bennet, I will——

Mrs. Bennet [*interrupting on "Bennet"*]. Oh, la, that's gone off! But I must warn you, with regard to Jane——

Mr. Collins. Pardon the interruption, dear madam, but you must allow *me* to open this interview. At the outset I desire to assure you of my profound concern for yourself and your five daughters in the circumstance of my being next in the entail, and therefore heir to Mr. Bennet's estate.

Mrs. Bennet. Ah, sir, that is a grievous affair for my poor girls, you must confess.

Mr. Collins [*checking further remark*]. Sensible as I am of the hardship to my fair cousins, I desire to make them every possible amends.

Mrs. Bennet. Very right and proper, sir, I am sure, but if it's Jane you have in mind——

Mr. Collins [*again waving a hand to stop her*]. With the aforesaid object in view, I came hither. Having now spent several days in the society of your beautiful and accomplished offspring, I have decided to make formal application for the hand of the eldest, Miss Jane. [*Preventing interruption.*] By your leave!—By this choice of the eldest, I make no reflection on the charms of the remaining four. I cannot marry more than one. Miss Jane's seniority is not the sole cause of my preference; I observe in her a——

Mrs. Bennet [*interrupting on "observe"*]. Stay, Mr.

Collins ! I beg you to let me put in a word ! I feel I must mention—I must hint—that Jane is already—that is, she is likely to be provided for. Any other of the girls, I am confident—that is, I *believe* they have not pledged their hearts. Jane, however—the gentleman who is about to become attached to Jane, has an exceedingly fine establishment.

*Mr. Collins [after a pause].* Say no more, madam. Miss Jane, I admit, did appear to me to have the superior claim—but my affections are not fixed. Miss Elizabeth, I have observed, has a pair of handsome dark eyes and a sprightly manner. I have no doubt she will prove an adornment to my rectory. As I have but a few days for further courtship, I shall be glad if you will use your influence with her, to procure me a private audience forthwith.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, dear, yes—certainly ! [*She hurries to the door.*] Lizzy, I want you ! Lizzy !

[*Mr. Collins has risen and bowed ; he stalks across the stage. Mrs. Bennet speaks as she flutters back.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* I am sure Lizzy will be very happy—I am sure she can have no objection !

[*Mr. Collins bows. The two girls enter, arm-in-arm, Elizabeth next the wall.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Not you, too, Jane ! Mr. Collins has something to say to Lizzy. [*Separating them.*] Come with me, Jane. I need you upstairs.

*Elizabeth [catching her near the door to the hall].* Dear ma'am, do not go ! Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody cannot hear. I am going away myself. [*Turning and making for the library.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Nonsense, Lizzy ! I desire you will stay where you are !

*Elizabeth.* Jane !

*Mrs. Bennet [grabbing Jane].* Jane is to come with me ! Lizzy, I insist upon your hearing Mr. Collins.

*Elizabeth.* Very well, mamma.

[*Mr. Collins has been watching the little scene with his thumbs in the armholes of his coat, his chest expanded, a fatuous smile on his face. He now offers Elizabeth the armchair. She prefers the settee, takes up her embroidery from the table, and sets to work industriously.*]

*Mr. Collins* [bowing]. Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there not been this little unwillingness. [*Bowing, he lays one hand on the back of the armchair.*] You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble. I have singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on the subject, perhaps it would be advisable to——

*Elizabeth.* But, sir——

*Mr. Collins* [bowing and waving his hand reprovingly]. Perhaps it would be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying.

[*He draws a deep breath in preparation.*]

*Elizabeth* [seizing her chance]. Your reasons, Mr. Collins, are admirable, I make no doubt, but for me they can have no possible——

*Mr. Collins* [bowing and interrupting her on “me”]. If I might be allowed to proceed——

[*She gives it up for the present. He gets fairly behind the chair as though it were a pulpit.*]

*Mr. Collins* [both hands on back of chair]. My reasons for marrying are—[*gently slapping the edge with his right hand*]. First, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances, like myself, to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, I am convinced that it will add very greatly to my happiness; and, thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier—but you heard me mention it to your mother—my marriage is the particular

advice and recommendation of Lady Catherine. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion—unasked ! On the last occasion she said : “ Mr. Collins, you must *marry*. A clergyman like you *must* marry. Choose properly. Choose a gentlewoman for *my* sake ; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. Find such a woman, as soon as you can, bring her to the rectory, and I will visit her ” And here I may observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine De Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. Your wit and vivacity must, I think, be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect due to her rank.

*Elizabeth*. But, Mr. Collins, do *allow* me to——

*Mr. Collins* [*interrupting on “allow”*]. In good time, my dear Miss Elizabeth ! It remains to be told why my search was directed hither—for in my own neighbourhood, I assure you, are many amiable young women. The fact is, that, being as I am to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father—who, however, may live many years longer—I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters. This has been my motive, my dear cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem.

*Elizabeth*. I must indeed admit, sir——

*Mr. Collins* [*silencing her, walks to the end of the settee*]. And now, nothing remains but to assure you, in the most animated language, of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature upon your father, since I am well aware it could not be complied with. On that head I shall be uniformly silent ; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.

[*He leans towards her ; she leans back.*]

*Elizabeth.* You are too hasty, sir ! [*Rising.*] You forget that I have made no answer.

[*As he moves to approach nearer, she crosses.*]

*Elizabeth.* Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them.

*Mr. Collins* [*smiling*]. I am not now to learn that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept when he *first* applies for their favour ; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second, or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long.

[*He walks forward a few paces.*]

*Elizabeth.* Upon my word, sir, your hope is rather extraordinary, after my declaration. I am not one of those young ladies—if such there be—who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. You could not make me happy, and I am the last woman in the world who could make *you* so. Nay, were your friend, Lady Catherine, to know me, I am persuaded she would find me ill-qualified for the situation.

[*He turns towards the audience.*]

*Mr. Collins* [*very gravely*]. Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so—[*he walks away and then looks at her*—but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. [*Walking towards her.*] And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again, I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications.

*Elizabeth.* Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself.

[*He comes a step nearer, but she motions him back and retreats with a bow.*]

*Elizabeth.* I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise.

[*She curtsies to him with an air of dismissal, sits on ottoman, and picks up a book.*]

*Mr. Collins.* When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer. [*Coming down on the right.*] Perhaps you have already said as much to encourage my suit as is consistent with the true delicacy of the female character.

*Elizabeth.* Really, Mr. Collins, you puzzle me exceedingly! If what I have said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as to convince you.

*Mr. Collins.* For reasons already stated, my fair cousin, I shall attribute it to your wish of increasing my ardour by suspense, according to the practice of elegant females.

*Elizabeth.* I assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions to the elegance of affected coyness. My feelings in every respect forbid me to accept you! Can I speak plainer?

*Mr. Collins.* You are uniformly charming!

*Elizabeth* [*rising*]. There is but one way to cut short our conversation. [*She sweeps across the room and out into the hall.*]

*Mr. Collins* [*bowing as she passes him*]. Ultimately, I am persuaded, my proposals will not fail to be acceptable.

[*She has gone. He turns to the audience with a smirk and moves left. Mrs. Bennet speaks without.*]

*Mrs. Bennet* [*without*]. Lizzy, where are you going? Silly girl! [*Entering.*] Well, Mr. Collins, we won't mind her! Let me be the first to congratulate you!

*Mr. Collins.* My most cordial thanks, dear Mrs.

Bennet! By-and-by, I trust, Miss Elizabeth will be as ready as I am to receive your congratulations! I flatter myself that her refusal of my addresses was the reverse of serious!

*Mrs. Bennet.* Refuse you—did she?

*Mr. Collins.* With all the apparent firmness of a truly elegant female!

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, dear, this will never do! [*Hastening to the doorway. He struts across the stage.*] Lizzy! Come back! Come back, I say! I'll bring her to reason! Lizzy!

[*Elizabeth returns.*]

*Mrs. Bennet* [*centre*]. Come right in! [*Elizabeth obeys.*] Looking as unconcerned as may be! Caring for nothing and nobody but to get your own way! What's this Mr. Collins tells me? You have rejected him?

*Elizabeth.* Yes, mamma.

*Mrs. Bennet.* You are a very foolish, headstrong girl, and do not know your own interest! But I will make you know it! I insist upon your——

*Mr. Collins* [*astounded*]. Pardon me for interrupting you, madam, but—can your exhortations be necessary?

*Mrs. Bennet.* That they are, Mr. Collins! She has always been a handful to control! Lizzy, I insist upon your marrying Mr. Collins! He is most obligingly doing what he can to make amends for that wretched entail, and you presume to set up your obstinate will against those who——

*Mr. Collins* [*interrupting on "obstinate"*]. Pardon me again, madam, but if she is *really* headstrong and foolish—I know not whether she would be a very desirable wife for a clergyman like myself!

*Elizabeth.* Indeed I should not, Mr. Collins!

*Mrs. Bennet.* You would, you naughty girl! Mr. Collins, you misunderstand—Lizzy is only headstrong in such matters as these. In everything else she is as

good-natured a young woman as ever lived. I will go directly to Mr. Bennet, and we shall soon settle it with her. [*Moving towards the library, calling.*] Mr. Bennet! You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins! She vows she will not have him—[*off, screaming*!—and if you do not make haste he will change his mind, and not have *her*! Oh, dear, he's not in the library! [*Returning.*] I'll speak to him on the first opportunity!

*Mr. Collins.* Pray do not be at the trouble, Mrs. Bennet! If my cousin persists in rejecting my suit, I feel it might be better not to force her to accept it.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Nonsense, Mr. Collins! She shan't defy her parents like this! The plague of it is that Mr. Bennet is so easy-going, he'll never put his foot down! He never does what I ask him! However, I'll assert *my* authority—I'll show her that her mother is not to be trifled with—I'll——

*Mr. Collins* [*interrupting on "mother"*]. Pardon me once more, madam! Pardon me! I cannot help fearing that she *has* defects of temper—an independence of spirit—that would not contribute to my felicity.

*Elizabeth.* I know I should make you miserable!

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, Lizzy, how can you tell such a falsehood?

*Elizabeth.* And offend Lady Catherine!

*Mrs. Bennet.* Be quiet, miss!

*Mr. Collins.* Enough, Mrs. Bennet! Allow me to withdraw my proposals! [*She collapses into arm-chair.*] In so doing I mean no disrespect to you, nor shall I resent your daughter's behaviour. The affair has turned out ill, but I cannot think that I have any cause for regret in my manner of conducting it. I have meant well throughout. My object has been to secure an amiable companion for myself, with due consideration for the advantage of others. I will now, by your leave, retire to my room to compose my sermon for the coming Sunday.



[*He bows and stalks out into the hall.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh, you are tiresome, Lizzy! Ten to one he is too put out to give you another chance.

*Elizabeth.* I am sorry to vex you, mamma.

*Mrs. Bennet.* You know you are nothing of the sort! I am in a dreadful state! Such flutterings and spasms! But you have no compassion on my poor nerves! It's always the way! Those who do not complain are never pitied. [*Suddenly spitting fire again.*] I tell you what it is, Miss Lizzy, if you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage, you will never get a husband at all!

[*Jane slips in.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Jane! You'd better talk to Lizzy. I can do nothing with her! She's been trampling on poor Mr. Collins without the smallest regard for my feelings.

[*Loud knock without.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* There's a knock at the front door. If it's your father come back, I shall fetch *him* in to you—then we shall see!

[*She departs, talking*]

*Jane.* Mercifully, you are not afraid of papa.

*Elizabeth.* What would mamma say if she knew of my earlier offer? [*Throwing herself on the settee, arms out along the back.*] Oh, Jane, how ridiculously I am punished for my prejudice against Darcy! You should have heard how Mr. Collins rejected my repeated refusals! He couldn't believe in my annoyance! Little did he guess that the sting of it lay in my bitter certainty that Darcy will never ask me again! I don't know whether to laugh or cry!

*Jane.* My dear, dear Lizzy! From my heart I pity you.

[*Mrs. Bennet's voice is heard.*]

*Mrs. Bennet* [*without, amazement and awe in her tone.*] This way, Lady Catherine!

[*She ushers Lady Catherine in.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Girls, the knock was Lady Catherine De Bourgh.—My daughters, Lady Catherine.

[*Jane is on Elizabeth's right. The girls curtsy, both with back to audience.*]

*Lady Catherine* [making no acknowledgment of the curtsies, to *Jane*]. Are you Miss Elizabeth Bennet?

*Jane.* My sister is "Elizabeth."

*Lady Catherine.* You are the better looking.

[*Confused, Jane turns away and picks up the footstool*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* *Jane* is admired, your ladyship, though *Lizzy* is thought to have a pair of fine dark eyes. The armchair, my Lady!

[*Elizabeth has fled to chair 1, but does not sit till her elders are seated.*]

*Jane.* May I offer you a footstool, Lady Catherine?

[*Lady Catherine sits in the armchair, Mrs. Bennet on the settee.*]

*Lady Catherine* [sitting]. I require no footstool. . . . This must be a most inconvenient sitting-room, for the evening in summer; the windows are full west.

[*Looking over the audience.*]

[*Jane takes the footstool across to the ottoman, where she sits.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* This is my morning-room, Lady Catherine. We never sit here after dinner. . . . May I take the liberty of offering your ladyship some refreshment?

*Lady Catherine* [energetically]. I should not dream of troubling you. This is not my hour for a meal.

*Mrs. Bennet.* But your ladyship has had a long drive—a very long drive, I understand from your Rector—you are aware that Mr. Collins is a guest in this house—he is above, composing his sermon. Ring the bell, *Lizzy*, and say——

[*Elizabeth has risen.*]

*Lady Catherine* [interrupting on "bell"]. I do not wish to see Mr. Collins.

[*Jane beckons Elizabeth to chair 2, beside her.*]

*Mrs. Bennet.* Did your ladyship find the roads in good condition ?

*Lady Catherine.* You have a very small park here.

*Mrs. Bennet.* It is nothing in comparison with yours, my lady, I daresay. But 'tis every bit as large as that of our neighbour, with whom Mr. Darcy was staying last winter. Mr. Darcy is your nephew—so Mr. Collins declares.

*Lady Catherine* [*glaring at Elizabeth*]. Mr. Darcy is my nephew.

*Mrs. Bennet* [*with no motive but to make conversation.*] Perhaps Mr. Darcy will be staying here again one of these days ?

*Lady Catherine.* He will not. . . . The object of my drive is to have a word in private with Miss Elizabeth Bennet.

*Mrs. Bennet* [*staggered*]. With Lizzy ? Oh, la !—certainly, my lady—though whatever it can be about—[*correcting herself*]*—Elizabeth will be honoured ! Come, Jane.*

[*Elizabeth rises. Jane throws Elizabeth a sympathetic glance as Mrs. Bennet carries her off to the library.*]

*Lady Catherine.* You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to understand the reason of my journey hither ?

*Elizabeth.* Indeed, you are mistaken, madam.

*Lady Catherine.* Miss Bennet, I am not to be trifled with. But however insincere *you* may choose to be, you shall not find *me* so. My character has ever been celebrated for sincerity and frankness. A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that you—*you*—are likely to be united in marriage to my nephew—my own nephew—Mr. Darcy. I *know* it must be a scandalous falsehood—I would not injure him so much as to suppose it possible. But I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.

*Elizabeth.* If you believed it impossible to be true, I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far. What could your Ladyship propose by the journey?

*Lady Catherine.* To insist upon having the report universally contradicted.

*Elizabeth.* Your coming to see me will be rather a confirmation of it—if, indeed, such a report is in existence.

*Lady Catherine.* Do you not know that it is?

*Elizabeth.* I never heard it.

*Lady Catherine.* And can you likewise declare that there is no *foundation* for it?

*Elizabeth.* I do not pretend to possess equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask questions which *I* shall not choose to answer.

*Lady Catherine* [*starting to her feet*]. This is not to be borne! Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has my nephew made you an offer of marriage?

[*Elizabeth rose the moment after Lady Catherine. The two are close together.*]

*Elizabeth.* Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible.

*Lady Catherine.* It ought to be impossible! It must be so while he retains the use of his reason. But he may have had a moment of infatuation. You may have drawn him in.

*Elizabeth.* If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it.

*Lady Catherine.* Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? His parents are no longer living. I am his aunt, and entitled to know all his nearest concerns.

*Elizabeth.* You are not entitled to know mine.

*Lady Catherine.* Let me be rightly understood. This match can never take place. No, never. Mr. Darcy is engaged to my daughter! Now, what have you to say?

*Elizabeth.* Only this: that if it be so, you have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me. [*She turns away.*]

[*For a second or two Lady Catherine stands glowering, then points to the settee, and seats herself in the armchair.*]

*Lady Catherine.* Come back, and sit down. The engagement between Mr. Darcy and my daughter is of a peculiar kind. From their infancy they have been intended for each other. While they were in their cradles I planned the union.

*Elizabeth.* To *plan* the union was as much as your ladyship could do.

*Lady Catherine.* Hear me in silence. My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. They are descended, on *my* side, from the same noble line, and on their father's from honourable and ancient, though untitled, families. Their fortunes are splendid. And what is to divide them? The upstart pretensions of a young woman of no account whatever? It must not—shall not be! For your own sake do not try to quit the sphere in which you were brought up.

*Elizabeth.* In marrying your nephew I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal.

*Lady Catherine.* True. Your father is a man of some standing. But who was your mother's father? Who are your uncles and aunts? I have made inquiries.

*Elizabeth.* Of Mr. Darcy? He is not ignorant of my connections.

*Lady Catherine.* Miss Bennet, if you wilfully act against the wishes of the De Bourgh family, you will not be noticed by them! You will be slighted and despised by every one connected with him. Your name shall never be mentioned by any of *us*!

*Elizabeth.* These are heavy misfortunes.

*Lady Catherine* [*springing towards her*]. Tell me, once for all, are you engaged to him?

*Elizabeth* [*after a moment's hesitation*]. I am not.

*Lady Catherine.* Ah! That is better. Promise me never to enter into such an engagement.

*Elizabeth.* I will make no promise of the kind.

*Lady Catherine.* Miss Bennet, I am shocked and astonished. [*After a moment's reflection, she sits in the armchair again.*] I shall not go away until you have given me the assurance I require.

*Elizabeth.* I certainly *never* shall give it.

*Lady Catherine.* A marriage with you would disgrace my nephew in the eyes of the whole world! Have you no regard for his honour and credit? Are you entirely lost to every consideration but your unfeeling, selfish ambition?

*Elizabeth.* Lady Catherine, I have nothing further to say.

*Lady Catherine* [*towards her again*]. You are, then, resolved to have him?

*Elizabeth.* I have said no such thing. I am only resolved to act in that manner which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you or to any person so wholly unconnected with me!

*Lady Catherine.* You refuse then to oblige me? You are determined to ruin him? Very well! [*Making for the door.*] Very well! . . . [*Turning back.*] I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet! I send no compliments to your mother. I am most seriously displeased! [*She reaches the doorway, but turns to fling one last shot.*] Do not imagine that your ambition will be gratified. I know now how to act. I shall forbid my nephew to call upon you this afternoon!

[*She sails into the hall.*]

*Elizabeth* [*alone, astounded*]. He intends to call? [*She stands a moment, glowing, then runs towards the library, calling softly and exultantly.*] Jane! [*Jane enters, and Elizabeth draws her forward.*] Jane, oh, Jane! He—he—this afternoon! [*They embrace.*]

BROTHER WOLF  
BY LAURENCE HOUSMAN

## CHARACTERS.

LUPO, *the robber chief.*

GIUSEPPE, }  
BARTOL, } *robbers.*  
CECCO, }  
BASTIANO, }  
FRANCIS.  
JUNIPER.

Approximate pronunciations    Lóopo, Jweeséppy, Bárt - oíl  
Chécko, Bastiáhno

Commentary, page 212    Acting Notes, page 246.



## BROTHER WOLF

SCENE.—*A rocky defile, gloomy and precipitous. High up in the crevices of the rock grow juniper bushes and pines. Over the ground, which is the pebbly bed of a dried torrent, large boulders lie strewn. To the right is a deep fissure, or cave, from which trickles a small stream of water. Behind the bushes above, one sees the back of a sheep and a horned head which turns to look, as GIUSEPPE, hot and out of breath, comes stumbling up the gully from below. He halts, looks right and left, then puts his hands to his mouth and makes the wolf's cry.*

*Giuseppe.* Wow! Wow! . . . Wow! Wow!

*Bartol* [*from above*]. B-a-a!

*Giuseppe.* Hullo, Bartol, where are the rest?

*Bartol.* Anywhere, for all I know. Here am I.

*Giuseppe.* I've news for them.

[*He sits down, pulls a melon from his pouch and starts slicing it.*]

*Bartol* [*still wearing his sheep-skin, straddles the rock*].

Eh? Where does that come from?

*Giuseppe.* Down yonder: Assisi market. Here! Catch! [*He throws him a half-melon, which Bartol begins eating.*]

*Bartol.* News, eh? Well, what is it?

*Giuseppe.* One telling's enough. Call Lupo: bid him be quick.

*Bartol* [*first howls, then barks*]. Ow-w-w! . . . Wow! Wow!

*Voice* [*in the distance*]. Ow-w-w! . . . Wow! Wow!

*[Giuseppe begins to unload his pouch: his pilferings are mainly articles of leather or steel; mixed with these are a few gewgaws, satisfying to male vanity.]*

*Giuseppe.* O Lord! what fools there are in the world! I could have taken double had I wanted.

*Bartol.* Easy enough in a thick crowd. See them now, down yonder, swarming through the gate like ants! *[He points forward.]*

*Giuseppe.* Aye? Market's over now. They'd got a preaching friar among them. When he began, they'd no eyes for anything. . . . Suited me well enough!

*Bartol.* What? That Poverello, as they call him?

*Giuseppe.* I daresay. Hungry-looking—all eyes and a mouth. Ugh! Moon-mad: you should have heard him!

*Voice [now nearer].* Wow!

*Bartol.* B-a-a! Cecco? Tell Messer Lupo it's Giuseppe back again.

*[Enter Cecco and Bastiano.]*

*Bastiano.* Any luck? . . . Oh!

*Giuseppe.* Where's the Wolf? Quick; I want him!

*[Enter Lupo, a fine figure of a man, with a touch of the savage dandy about him. He wears chained coins and ear-rings. He stands and looks out over Assisi.]*

*Cecco.* Lo, behind you, brother.

*Lupo.* Ha! you vermin! Look at them! Curse, curse on you!

*Giuseppe.* Now, Messer Lupo, show yourself a wise wolf, and run! There's a holy man after you.

*Lupo.* Heh? What's he?

*Giuseppe.* Mad! That's all I know.

*Bartol.* It's the Poverello, padrone.

*[Spreading them on a slab of rock, the robbers settle down to divide Giuseppe's pickings among them.]*

*Lupo.* Does his madness bring him here ?

*Giuseppe.* Aye ! He is coming to catch you, Messer Lupo. That hath he sworn, with the whole city to witness. And as he so spake, Porco di Dio, you should have heard them !

*Lupo.* Go on, go on, Giuseppe ! Make shorter tongue, and have done with it !

*Giuseppe.* 'Tis thus, Messer Lupo. He is coming with holy water ; and terror will be on you ! First he strikes you blind, then deaf, then dumb, then silly. Then when he hath hold of you by all your senses, he'll pick you to pieces, put you in a bag, salt you down, carry you back to Assisi, ring the bells—(He told them that : “ To-night, ring the bells ! ” he said)—Then they'll call a feast . . . then they'll eat you

*Lupo.* You dirty thief, you have been drinking !

*Giuseppe.* Dirty thief am I ? Yes, I have been drinking—with my ears too : else you wouldn't be hearing of it. It's the talk of the taverns I'm telling you, and it's the truth. So now, old Wow-wow, you know what your end's going to be !

*Lupo* [*threateningly*]. Get ! Stand up ! Hands away !

[*Giuseppe puts up his hands ; fright sobers him.*]  
Now then ! Clean your tongue ! Out with it !

*Giuseppe* [*stammering*]. 'Tis as I said, Messer Lupo ; and as I heard it. Afterwards the Poverello himself was there speaking in the market. And he said—— [*He pauses.*]

*Lupo.* Aye, said : said what ?

*Giuseppe.* I—I don't know, Messer Lupo ! 'Tis all gone from me. He talked such moon-madness, 'twas more than a sane man could understand. 'Twas all “ Brother Wolf,” and “ Brother Wolf,” and “ If you try to eat him,” he says, “ he tries to eat you. But we'll have him,” he says, “ so that he can harm nobody.” And there was the crowd all laughing

and crying round him, like a pack of fools. So he said if he brought you back to Assisi, safe and bound, would they give you to him to do with as he wished. And they all said "Aye!" And he said, "Let me have his life, and you shall have peace!" So they agreed. And—[*he stops*]*—*that was all, Messer Lupo. For I'd got my sack full by then, and 'twas better I came away.

*Lupo.* Aye, so? "Safe and bound"; have my life, will they?

*Cecco.* You've had a many of theirs, Messer Lupo!

*Lupo.* And will have more! Ah, you blind bats! [*Shaking his fist towards Assisi.*] Wait, wait, till my whelps be grown! . . . Up, Bartol, to your post!

[*Bartol resumes his sheep-skin and returns to his perch.*]

*Giuseppe.* They have a great fear of you, Messer Lupo.

*Lupo.* They do well.

*Giuseppe.* None will go forth of the city now, but armed and in company.

*Lupo.* It shall not save them.

*Cecco.* No, nor their flocks, either.

*Giuseppe.* Ah! And you should hear the farmers talk of all the sheep and goats we have taken. For every one that is true they tell of ten. So now, with so many missing, they say there be fifty of us!

*Lupo.* And we will be fifty yet! Ah, you dogs, you dogs! When I have gathered my pack I will make you yelp!

*Others.* Where are the rest, Messer Lupo? Where are the rest of us?

*Lupo.* They come, they come, brothers. Patience! You are but the first.

*All.* Wow! Wow!

*Lupo.* Then, then we will taste blood!

*All.* Wow! Wow!

*Lupo.* And go forth with sword and fire !

*All.* Wow ! Wow !

*Lupo.* And lo, Assisi, red-eyed and roofless, glaring into the dark !

*All.* Assisi, Assisi ! Down with Assisi ! Wow ! Wow !

*Lupo.* Aye, hearken to me, now ! You beat me, you stoned me, you cast me out ! So, like a beast you hunted me ! I sought justice ; it was denied. You mocked me : you would not hear.

*All.* Ow-w-w ! Wow ! Wow !

[*Lupo draws his dagger for pantomime.*]

*Lupo.* Over his head by night, I burned the roof of my betrayer ; and with sharp teeth I bit my way through the midst of them. " Wolf ! Wolf ! " They were up, they were after me !

*All.* Wow ! Wow ! Wow ! Wow !

*Lupo.* They shut the gates, but I was over the wall. " Wolf ! Wolf ! " they cried, but too late. I was out, I was free.

*All.* Wow ! Wow !

*Lupo.* Then you came, brothers : for you, also, they had wronged. And together we have taught them fear ! Cry, cry ! Let them hear the voice of the wolf !

*All.* Wow ! Wow !

*Lupo.* Dogs !

*Bartol.* Baa-a !

[*At this cry of warning from above, Lupo goes to look.*]

*Lupo.* Back ! Take cover, all of you.

[*The robbers disappear. Lupo and Cecco enter the cave ; Giuseppe creeps under a pine-root, Bastiano behind a large boulder ; Bartol keeps cover under his sheep-skin. Enter Francis, followed by Juniper, carrying a sack.*]

*Juniper.* Not so fast, Father Francis ! Oh, for the love of God, not so fast !

*Francis.* Are you weary, Brother ?

*Juniper.* Truly no, Father ; not weary. But this is an ill place we be come to.

*Francis.* Wherefor ?

*Juniper.* Eh ! dark, I mean.

*Francis.* Farther on it will be darker.

*Juniper.* Aye, and rough stones, Father, to stumble over ; and holes to fall into ; and torrents to get drowned in ; and caves—[*He turns and sees Francis approaching the entrance of the cave*—Oh, for the love of God, don't go there, Father ! There's somebody in it !

*Francis.* Sister Water is there, Brother. If she fears not, why should we ?

*Juniper.* Eh, but she is coming out as fast as she can run.

*Francis.* She is kind, Brother : and because we are thirsty she runs to meet us. [*He stoops to drink.*]

*Juniper* [*holding back*]. I shouldn't wonder, Father, but there's blood in it. [*A stone followed by rubble falls from above.*] O Lord, what's that ?

*Francis.* Come, drink, Brother. This water is cool and clear, and will refresh you. Farther on, we may find none.

*Juniper.* Are we to go farther, Father ? Why are we to go farther ?

*Francis.* To find Brother Wolf.

*Juniper.* The Lord preserve us from him ! What's in this bag, Father ?

*Francis.* Food, Juniper, and wine and raiment.

[*He sets it upon a rock in the foreground. Lupo, followed by Cecco, comes and stands in the entrance of the cave. The other robbers raise their heads cautiously to listen.*]

*Juniper.* What will the big robber want with that, Father ?

*Francis.* For his body—it is all that he *can* want.

*Juniper.* I think not, Father. What he wants is blood, and terror, foul lust, and cruelty. He puts men

in bonds, Father ; he draws out their insides ; he pulls out their teeth ; he cuts off their ears ; he tears out their hearts ! Oh !

*Francis.* So will I do to him, Brother.

*Juniper.* Thou, Father !

*Francis.* Ere this day is over, Juniper, thou shalt see Brother Wolf in bonds. Yea, I will draw out his inside, and his teeth shall not harm me. I will have him by the nose and the ears ; and I will pull out his heart.

*[At this, from Lupo and his robber-band, there is much grinding of teeth. They begin to close in on Francis, who, taking the sack from Juniper, has begun to sort out its contents. They sit down on a rock to rest ]*

*Juniper.* Well, Father, if it be God's will we shall be hanged for it !

*Francis.* Thou shalt see a wolf changed into a lamb, Juniper.

*Bartol.* Baa-a !

*Juniper.* There's a wise sheep, Father. He answers you !

*[Francis displays bread, meat, and wine, setting them on the rock before him.]*

*Francis.* Look you, Brother, is not this a fair feast ? Shall it not rejoice his eyes when he beholds it ?

*[Lupo's eyes do not respond to the invitation.]*

*Juniper.* Why should it, Father ? For by the robbery of honest men he can get all that and more.

*Francis.* Brother Wolf is no fool, Juniper. Think you that it doth not grieve him to rob men ? For why should you seek to rob others, if you yourself be not in need ?

*Juniper.* Truly, Father, I have no wish to rob others !

*Francis.* And dost thou think there is any man in the world more foolish than thou art ? Brother Wolf hath eyes like you and me : doth he not prefer

light to darkness ? He hath ears : doth he not prefer greetings to reproaches ? He hath a heart, Brother : shall he not prefer kindness to misery ? If he had food enough of his own, would he filch it from thee ?

*Juniper.* I know not, Father.

*Francis.* Why, no ! For if thou art a robber, men fear thee, and seek not thy company : therefore, thou art lonely. Also, when they hunt thee thou must run and hide : therefore, thou art homeless. And being homeless thou hast no family, nor friends to whom thou canst do service. And if thou have none of these, of what use to thee is the wealth thou takest from others ?

*Juniper.* I have none of these, Father : but neither have I wealth.

*Francis.* Thou hast great wealth, Juniper : for thou hast charity. All that thou hast thou givest. Therefore give charity to Brother Wolf, and take pity on him, seeing that he is very sorry for himself.

*[At this point the grinding of Lupo's teeth becomes almost audible. His followers, too mentally dazed to follow the argument, take their cue from him, and do likewise.]*

*Juniper.* Father, it's no use pretending, is it, Father ?

*Francis.* No, Brother.

*Juniper.* May I say truly as I have a mind ?

*Francis.* I command you, my son.

*Juniper.* Father, you have a holy madness in you, and there's no curing you. I've prayed, Father—often I've prayed the Lord to give you back your senses. But He hasn't done it. He's only taken mine too. So here's the pair of us, with not enough sense left to catch a flea—let alone a robber. And if I wasn't so mad, Father, I'd think we were in danger now. For I've a feeling that I've only got to turn my head and I should see something.

*Francis.* Brother Juniper, I will tell thee a story.



*Juniper.* Yes, Father?

*Francis.* A young hawk fell from its nest, so hurt that it could not fly. When I took it to hand, it pecked and drew blood. But I did not kill it; it was helpless, so I brought it home with me. And its beak was very sharp.

*Juniper.* 'Twas a bright bird! It knew how to get round you, Father.

*Francis.* Then I made it a nest, and brought food for it. It ate mice, brother, and meat, and dead vermin; and when it could get nothing else, it ate me. But though it liked the taste of me, it had no love for me. So when its wing was healed and it could fly, forthwith it departed.

*Juniper.* A hawk is a vile bird, Father.

*Francis.* A hawk is a hawk, Brother. When God made hawks He was not making men. So, when He made wolves, it was not men either: and never shall a wolf become a man. How, then, can a man become a wolf?

*Juniper.* But the hawk did ill, Father: for thou hadst saved his life.

*Francis.* Even so hath God saved mine: yet do I sin against Him. Now when He, by love, showeth us how we be helpless, He showeth us also the helplessness of others. And since I loved Brother Hawk, that tore my flesh from me, shall I not also love Brother Wolf?

*[This is altogether beyond the comprehension of Lupo and his companions: but at least they can put the matter to the test. To that end Lupo gives a signal; and the robbers, cord in hand, draw close to their intended victims, while Francis continues to instruct Brother Juniper.]*

Aye, though he should put bonds on me, and draw out my teeth and my inside——

*[Juniper catches sight of the robbers that are about to fall on Francis.]*

*Juniper.* O Father! Father!

*Francis.* —and cut off my ears and tongue, and tear out my—

[*At a signal from Lupo the robbers fall on them and bind them. Juniper struggles instinctively, but without desperation. Francis accepts the interruption as a step upon the road.*]

*Francis.* Is that you, Brother Wolf?

*Lupo.* Aye! My teeth are in thee now, Friar. Safe and bound!

*Francis.* Thou hast begun well, Brother. Tarry awhile. See now, Juniper, here hath Brother Wolf got his teeth in me—in thee also. And, by the look of him, he is going to tear us to pieces. Yet shall we still love him. And by nothing that he may do can he prevent it.

*Lupo* [*drawing his knife*]. Not if I slay thee? How then?

*Juniper.* O Father, say a prayer for me!

[*But Juniper's captors cuff him to silence.*]

*Francis.* Thou art very like a wolf, Brother. But a wolf stands not on his hind legs as thou dost.

*Lupo.* Peace, thou fool!

*Francis.* God give thee peace also, Brother!

*Lupo* [*to Juniper*]. Thou fellow, is this man mad?

*Juniper.* Aye, Brother! He is more mad than I am. For I have it only by fits, but he always.

*Francis.* Thou hast a kind face, Brother. Tell me thy true name.

[*This affront to his face makes Lupo more murderously inclined than ever.*]

*Juniper* [*cheerfully encouraged by the example of Francis*]. Bite him! Bite him, Brother Wolf! He will like thee the better for it!

*Lupo.* Cease, babbler! Or I cut out thy tongue.

*Francis.* Cut out mine first, Brother; 'tis the longer. And the more thou hast of it, the better shall it pay thee!

*Lupo.* These be not sane men !

*Juniper* [*with conviction*]. We are not, Brother !

*Francis.* Yet rather would I give thee my heart. There is not much meat on my bones ; but my heart thou shalt find tender.

*Cecco.* Messer Lupo, these men make mock of thee.

*Lupo.* So be ! Patience, and we will hear them. Sirrah, whence come you ?

*Francis.* From down yonder—from Assisi.

*Lupo.* Wherefor ?

*Francis.* To find thee, Brother.

*Lupo.* To what end ?

*Francis.* To succour thee, for thou art in misery.

*Lupo* [*restraining himself*]. Go on, Friar.

*Francis.* Now for thy body (which is a small thing) here is food and raiment.

*Giuseppe.* Have a care, master ! He hath bewitched them.

*Francis.* For thy soul (which is a great thing), alas, Brother, thy soul, thy soul is in jeopardy !

*Lupo.* And thy life ! [*He raises his knife.*]

*Francis.* Brother Wolf, thou art a foul liver. Thou hast done great wickedness.

[*Lupo lowers his knife in astonishment.*]  
Shame on thee, Brother, shame on thee !

*Cecco.* Master, shall this man live ?

*Lupo.* Peace, Cecco !

*Francis.* Thou hast been cruel, and hast shed blood ; thou hast robbed, thou hast burned, thou hast wasted ; and the riches which God gave thee, thou hast vilely cast away.

*Lupo.* Which God gave *me*, Friar ?

*Francis.* Did He not give thee a heart, Brother ?—eyes, also, and a brain ? Hadst thou not compassion and kindness and understanding ? Was not thy strength given thee for the service of men ? And lo, now, in thy heart is hatred, and in thine eyes blind-

ness ; and fire burns in thy brain, and blood is upon thy hands. Shall I not weep, therefore, for the misery wherein I find thee ?

*Lupo.* Thou art a brave Friar ! Dost thou not fear death ?

*Francis.* For thee, Brother, greatly I fear it. Lo, the Pit : and in the Pit the flame leapeth : and in the flame the soul of him that I love perisheth ! For, lo, the Pit opens : and wherever thou goest the flame runneth after thee.

*[Lupo and the robbers start back horrified.]*

Now it is under thy feet, now it catches thee by the hands, now by the throat, now by the heart !

*Robbers.* Messer Lupo, this man is a holy terror. Save us, save us !

*Francis.* And lo, and lo, and lo ! . . .

*[There comes a deep rumbling, a great fall of rock and shale slides down the mountain. The mouth of the pass is filled with rubble and torn trees.]*

*Robbers.* Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! The mountain is falling on us !

*[They run hither and thither and cower in hiding-places. Juniper, bound hand and foot, performs a sack-race dance across obstacles, and kneels before Francis, very shaken and trembling.]*

*Juniper.* O Father Francis, Father Francis, put your arms round me, or I shall go through !

*Francis.* 'Tis only Brother Mountain shaking himself. Do not be afraid !

*Juniper.* I'd wish it were only some one else then, Father. Ah ! There ! He's at it again !

*[There comes another landslide. The robbers howl despairingly, and run. Lupo stays fixed, half-raised from the ground to which he has fallen. He stares at Francis, to whom Juniper is now clinging with his bound hands.]*

*Francis.* It is over, Juniper.

*Juniper.* Ah ! Then let us be quick away, Father,

ere they be back on us. Look ! If I undo thy bonds, then canst thou undo mine.

*Francis.* Why should we run away, Juniper ? Brother Wolf needs us.

*Juniper.* Sure and true ! Looks as if all his teeth had dropped out, Father !

*[For Juniper has read signs that do much to reassure him. Lupo comes forward and cuts their bonds.]*

*Lupo.* Take thy curse from me, Father Friar, for I am not fit to die.

*Francis.* I did not curse thee, Brother.

*Lupo.* Ah ! Did not the Pit open ?

*Francis.* It was a little fall of earth, Brother. Mother Earth opened her hand ; but she was kind and hath hurt nobody.

*Lupo.* Aye : but why came it then ?

*Francis.* I know not. Come, call thy men back to thee, for I would speak with them.

*Lupo.* They are gone. I am alone !

*Francis.* Not alone, Brother.

*Lupo.* Thou man of wonder ! Who art thou ?

*Francis.* I am the little fool of Assisi, the Poverello ; hast thou not heard tell of him ? Men laugh when they speak of me.

*Lupo.* From Assisi art thou ?

*Francis.* She was my mother ; I was born there.

*Lupo.* She was mine—and she cast me out ! In the place of justice she denied me ; in my own house she robbed me ; in the market she mocked me ; in the street she stoned me ; she cursed me, she hated me, she sought me that she might slay me. And now, shall I let vengeance go ?

*Francis.* Take thy vengeance, Brother, and do this. Be thou kind to her !

*[He stretches out his arms in the form of the cross.]*

*Lupo.* I ?—kind ! *[A dull amazement seizes him.]*

*Francis.* O Brother, stand by my side, and look upon this city ! Is she not fair ?

[*Lupo looks ; there is still hatred in his eyes, his hand rests on the handle of his dagger.*]

See her face, how it turns to thee in the light of the sun ! Behold her towers like watchmen upon the walls, and her roofs like wings to cover her, and her windows like eyes. She hath ears also, and hands, and feet, brother ; and therewithal she hath a heart. And in her heart standeth the fear of thee. Down below are streets, and doors, and a market-place, and nomes both for rich and poor. And these be full of the music of men's voices and the laughter of children, of tears also, and cries of sorrow and anger. But it is not sorrow or anger which giveth beauty to her face, or strength unto her towers. And the fear of thee that is in her heart bringeth no happiness.

Come, Brother, let thy heart go down with me into yonder city. Here is a house where a mother suckles her babe ; and the child knoweth her, though he understandeth not. Here is a house where a young man bringeth his bride. He closeth the door, he turneth, he kisseth her. Sweet is the taste of love upon their lips. Here is a house where a man lies dying : he hath been strong, but now he is feeble and weak. Many things did he with his body, Brother ; often he did ill, sometimes he did well. Now cometh death, and he understandeth not ; yet the good that he did comforteth him.

[*Lupo shows signs of compunction and understanding ; his hand drops from his dagger.*]

Francis. Yea, because he had love and not hatred within his heart, therefore he is not solitary.

[*Francis lays his hand on Lupo's breast.*]

Ah, Brother, what is this that moveth *thy* heart, so that it leapeth ? Listen, I will tell thee. A man stood once and looked upon a city ; grievously had she sinned. And by his side stood the angel of God that was come to destroy it. So he said to the angel, " If there be found in this city fifty righteous, wilt

thou not spare it for fifty's sake ? " And he answered, " I will spare it for fifty." Then he said, " If there lack five of the fifty ? " " I will not destroy it for lack of five." " If there be forty ? " " I will not destroy it for lack of ten." " If there be thirty ? " " Nay." " If there be twenty ? " The angel said, " I will not destroy it for twenty's sake."

[*Lupo begins slowly to unbuckle the belt of his dagger.*] And he said, " Oh, let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once. Peradventure there shall be ten found there ? " And he said, " I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

[*Lupo's belt and dagger fall to the ground. Juniper, with eyes avid for signs, continues to cross himself and pray.*]

Brother Wolf, thou art a sinner, as I also am a sinner. Wilt thou, having so many sins to thy charge, be less merciful than God that is without sin ?

[*Lupo buries his face in his hands. From a distance comes the chiming of bells.*]

Juniper. It is the bells, Father !

Francis. Yes, 'tis the bells of Assisi that thou hearest. They are ringing for thee. Come, and I will show thee twenty in that city, yea forty, yea fifty, yea an hundred that shall be glad, when thou hast taken from their hearts the fear they have of thee. . . . [*A pause.*] Brother Wolf.

[*Lupo, with a sob, reaches out his hand to Francis.*]

Lupo. I am blind, Father ; lead me. . . . My life is in thy hands. I will go down with thee ! Yes, I will go down.

Juniper [*wrapt in ecstasy*]. O Father, I was a fool ! For when I came here, I was afraid.

[*But Francis, wrapt likewise, listens and does not answer. The bells say everything.*]





## COMMENTARY ON THE PLAYS AND THE AUTHORS

### BEATRICE MAYOR: THIRTY MINUTES IN A STREET

It is the prime business of farce to make us laugh, loudly ; and if, without insulting our good taste and intelligence, it succeeds in doing this, then we should be grateful, and not ask it to do anything more.

Mrs. Mayor succeeds brilliantly, as any tolerable performance of the play will prove to the joy of the audience and actors alike ; and perhaps she has, like Charlie Chaplin, given us something else besides laughter. In this play, as in her three-act comedy of *The Pleasure Garden*, she holds up to nature a theatrical mirror, like the little curved mirror of the motorist, which shows life very bright and hard and all rather queer : but in her mirror we sometimes catch glimpses of ourselves which reveal things unnoticed in the sedate, plain glass of the dressing-table.

#### FOR DISCUSSION

1. As one expects of a good farce, *Thirty Minutes in a Street* is much more amusing when it is seen on the stage than when it is read. How would it gain in performance?
2. Which character in the play is most fully portrayed ?
3. Which is the most amusing incident in the play, and which the most improbable ?
4. What do you think of the student ?
5. If you had to omit six of the characters in a performance which would you choose, and why ?

6. Is there any climax in the play? Are there any touches of pathos or cynicism or irony? If so, where do they occur?

#### FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

7. Why does the Old Lady have to correct herself three times in her short speech (page 19) beginning "I'm quite sure we never . . ."?

8. Write a short episode to be added to the play, showing exactly where it is to be fitted in, and imitating the writer's style as closely as you can.

9. The writers of farce (and of melodrama) do not attempt a true representation of life, but adopt the methods of caricature for the sake of a particular kind of theatrical effect: it is this which distinguishes farce from comedy and melodrama from tragedy. Is this the method of *Thirty Minutes in a Street*? If so, where is it most evident?

#### FURTHER READING

10.\* *Four Plays for Children*, by Beatrice Mayor.

11. *The Stepmother*, by Arnold Bennett; *The Theatre* (in *Four Modern Plays*, Nelson), by H. F. Rubinstein; *Incorrigible*, by A. J. Talbot.

### MARY PAKINGTON: THE HOUSE WITH THE TWISTY WINDOWS

One of the most striking features of modern drama is the rapidity with which it has perfected the technique of realism. Playwrights of to-day present the surface appearances of truth to life with a skill which was unknown fifty years ago, before the advent of Ibsen, when audiences were apparently pleased to accept blindly the most clumsy stage-apparatus of

\* Under the heading of "Further Reading" the first paragraph gives other plays by the same author, and the second paragraph gives one-act plays by other authors which are similar in theme or treatment.

asides, soliloquies, coincidences, improbable entrances and exits, and stilted, unnatural dialogue. While it still leaves fantasy, poetic drama, and expressionism free to follow independent paths of development, this advance in technique has brought a great accession of strength to the drama, especially in plays of contemporary life. The advance is certainly to be welcomed, though it has at least one drawback: poverty of thought and feeling can be masked more completely than ever by technical skill, and realism is often an all too plausible substitute for reality.

It is when realism and reality come together that modern drama shows its distinctive excellence, and there is not a little of this excellence in *The House with the Twisty Windows*. The dramatist has not stooped to mere sensation-mongering, which appears in much that has lately been written about Russia, but she takes full advantage of the dramatic possibilities of the "Red Terror," without sacrificing imaginative truth of character and incident. The terrible uncertainties of the situation—so near to us, yet so far away—the suspense, and the almost intolerable strain are made very real; the characters are living human beings, and the play reaches tragic intensity through their varying reactions to each other and to the stress of circumstance. Here is one more answer to the question, ancient and eternally new, What can men and women do in the face of fear and pain and death? When the answer is a brave one, in life or in literature, we take courage from it.

#### FOR DISCUSSION

12. Is the title of the play well chosen?
13. What do you think of the way in which the others receive Anne's announcement that "We're going to be released to-morrow morning"? (page 45). Would they have behaved differently on the second day of their captivity?

14. What is dramatic irony ? Does it appear in this play ?

15. "Sure, you're looking through the twisty windows all the while—and you not knowing it," says Moore (page 54). What exactly does he mean ?

16. Apart from Derrick Moore, who is the bravest person in the play ?

#### FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

17. If you rewrote this play as a short story, what would be the chief alterations ?

18. Compare Roper with Derrick Moore

19. Write two short critical paragraphs on the play one adverse and one favourable. Think carefully and write them out roughly before you give them their final form.

#### FURTHER READING

20. *The True Likeness*, by Mary Pakington.

21. *Campbell of Kilmohr*, by J. A. Ferguson (in *Eight Modern Plays*, with the author's final revisions and acting notes) ; *The Change-house*, by John Brandane.

#### REGINALD ARKELL : COLOMBINE

Harlequin and Colombine, Pierrot and Pierrette, sometimes with Pantaloon and the Policeman in attendance, are among the oldest inhabitants of the stage, and the complete chronicle of their adventures in England alone during the past two hundred years would make another Cambridge History. Their characters and their relationships have changed. There was a time when Columbine (for this is the more usual spelling) was Harlequin's daughter, with a persecuted lover. The garrulous Harlequin of Mr. Arkell's play is himself very different from his dumb ancestor of the early eighteenth century, who won such popularity through John Rich's mastery of pantomime. But he retains something of his old

character of the wizard of the piece, whose wand so often bewitched the young eyes of our forefathers with dazzling transformation scenes: the music and the dancing paused, and in a flash the toad became a fairy prince, the hovel was an eastern palace with djinns and dragons galore.

Nowadays, at the first glimpse of Harlequin's diamond patchwork or Colombine's ballet-skirt, we expect sentiment and are relieved if we do not get sentimentality, but the old characters play such varied parts that they sometimes spring surprises on us. Indeed, Miss Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Ariada Capo* is a play of haunting and subtle tragic beauty. *Colombine*, however, takes us to no strange land, and has the happy air we expect of so successful a writer of light verse as Mr. Arkell.

#### FOR DISCUSSION

22. What is a fantasy? What fantasies do you know?

23. Where are Cissbury Hill and Ditchling, and where was the play first acted?

24. Who were the "dummel soul" who had the box of troubles, and the maiden who let them escape?

25. Is there anything unusual about the verse in this play? Does the verse ever become poetry?

26. Does the play gain or lose by being partly written in verse, and why?

27. What is the difference between sentiment and sentimentality? Does the play escape the latter?

28. How would the play gain or lose if the farm labourers were omitted?

29. What other Pierrot and Harlequin plays do you know? Who is the fourth character, who does not appear in *Colombine*?

#### FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

30. Try to explain why you like or dislike *Colombine*.

31. Picture clearly in your mind the scene of the play, and then describe it.

32. Compare *Colombine* with *The Poetasters of Ispahan* (in *Nine Modern Plays*), or with *The Princess and the Woodcutter* (in *Eight Modern Plays*).

33. Write a prologue for a performance of this play by your own school or society.

34. You have been allowed to look for a moment into the great crystal mentioned by Harlequin. Describe what you saw.

### FURTHER READING

35. *The Tragedy of Mr. Punch*, by Russell Thorndike and Reginald Arkell.

36. *The Maker of Dreams*, by Oliphant Down ; *Aria da Capo*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay ; *The Only Legend, a Masque of the Scarlet Pierrot*, by John Drinkwater ; *The Blue Harlequin* (in *Diminutive Dramas*), by Maurice Baring ; *Pantaloon*, by J. M. Barrie (in *The Twelve Pound Look and other Plays*) : this begins with a whimsical "family history" of Pantaloon and Columbine, in the author's most delightful manner.

### ARTHUR HOPKINS : MOONSHINE

Like many other dramatists, including Sir James Barrie and Mr. A. A. Milne, Mr. Hopkins was a journalist for some years before the theatre claimed him. He is now one of the best-known theatre managers in his native country, the United States of America. Though not a professional dramatist, he shows in this play how effectively he can turn to account his knowledge of the stage, and the skill with which a good situation is handled makes *Moonshine* an effective drama to act. It is the first of Mr. Hopkins's plays to be published in England.

### FOR DISCUSSION

37. What is the full significance of the title ?

38. When do you first guess that the revenue officer is Jim Dunn, and why ?

39. For what purpose did the dramatist include the

dialogue about Luke Hazy's family feud with the Crosbys ?

40. Which is the most exciting moment in the play ?
41. How can you tell from the dialogue of the play that the characters are Americans ?
42. Is there anywhere in the British Isles where you might find an illicit distillery to-day ?
43. Is the play true to life ?

#### FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

44. Describe briefly the character of Luke Hazy.
45. Write a dialogue between Luke and another "moonshiner" in which the former explains how Dunn tricked him.
46. Write a short story describing how the feud between the Hazy family and the Crosbys began.

#### FURTHER READING

47. *The Grand Cham's Diamond*, by Allan Monkhouse ; *Shivering Shocks*, by Clemence Dane ; *The Burglar and the Girl*, by Matthew Boulton ; *The Red Owl*, by William Gillette.

### ST. JOHN HANKIN: THE NEW WING AT ELSINORE

St. John Hankin (1869-1909) cannot claim a place in the front rank of modern dramatists, for his talent was limited and was not fully developed during his tragically short career as a writer for the theatre. His first play, *The Two Mr. Wetherbys*, was not written until 1903, and he died with his eighth play, *Thompson*, uncompleted. But all his work has distinctive quality. He wrote social comedies, marked by a careful, realistic workmanship and a cool, smiling cynicism which would have no sentiment, no "illusions." He made a determined attack upon the conventional happy ending into which many a playwright has twisted his play, defying truth and logic

in order to send the audience away smiling. Like many other modern dramatists, he has reminded us that the most important part of a love-story comes after marriage.

Hankin was a journalist before he was a dramatist, and his "Dramatic Sequels," including this play, made their first appearance in *Punch*. Slight as they are, they are characteristic in their dry, rather destructive humour, and all of them are amusing reading for any one who knows the original plays—which include *Alcestis*, *The Critic*, *The School for Scandal*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Patience*, and *Cæsar and Cleopatra*.

If you have not read *Hamlet* lately, evidently you must re-read it at once!

#### FOR DISCUSSION

48. Who wrote *Ghosts*, and what do you know about him? Which of his plays is mentioned by Horatio?

49. What exactly did Macbeth say? (page 106).

50. The very blank verse of this play may persuade you that, as Mr. Bernard Shaw maintains, blank verse (of a kind) is easier to write than prose. Here, however, its flatness is deliberate, and helps to set off the phrases from *Hamlet* which have been skilfully woven into the dialogue. How many of these phrases can you find?

#### FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

51. Is *The New Wing at Elsinore* a parody or a burlesque? What is the difference between the two?

52. Both parody and burlesque, in different degrees, involve criticism. What direct or indirect criticism of *Hamlet* can you find in this play?

53. Write a third scene, in which Horatio and Fortinbras, on their way back, are waylaid by the ghost of Hamlet's father, who is waiting to unfold a tale which will make them jump. Or write a "dramatic sequel" of your own to any play which you know. In either case you should use a number of phrases from the original play.



## COMMENTARY

### FURTHER READING

54. *Dramatic Sequels* and *The Constant Lover*, by St. John Hankin.

55. *The Rehearsal*, by Maurice Baring (in *Nine Modern Plays*); *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, by George Bernard Shaw.

### SHEILA KAYE-SMITH: MRS. ADIS

The country life of old England, not Utopian indeed but native to the soil, distinctive, strong and self-contained, is rapidly disappearing under modern conditions. Its last knell sounded with the advent of the small motor-omnibus, which has brought to the very door of the cottage the dubious advantages of life in town. Now broadcasting too is having its influence

For good or ill, the change is inevitable, but by good fortune many rural territories have found their chroniclers in contemporary literature before it is too late. Thomas Hardy, with his great novels of Wessex; Mr. Eden Philpotts, Bernard Gilbert, Mary Webb, Maurice Hewlett, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and others, with work of varying quality and kind, have interpreted sincerely the life of their chosen counties.

Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith has won a leading place in this group of writers, and the story of Mrs. Adis, brief as it is, shows many of those noble qualities which have made her Sussex novels so deservedly popular. Her skill in telling a story is equalled by her power in creating men and women, and by her deep sense of the influence of surroundings on human character. Sussex lives again in her pages.

### FOR DISCUSSION

56. What kind of man is Peter Crouch?

57. Why does Mrs. Adis let him escape? Is she right or wrong?

58. When did you guess that the man whom Crouch killed was Tom Adis?

## FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

59. In the story, Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith describes the horror which overwhelms Peter Crouch as he learns that he has killed his friend. He feels that he does not want to live, that his life is forfeit to Mrs. Adis. Something of this horror could have been shown in the play by hiding him so that he could be seen by the audience, although not by the gamekeepers. Would this have strengthened the play?

60. Compare the play with the story of *Mrs. Adis*, which you will find in the volume called *Joanna Godden Married*, and in *Reading and Thinking*, Book VI. (Nelson). Comment on the alterations which have been made.

## FURTHER READING

61. *Saints in Sussex* (poems and plays), by Sheila Kaye-Smith.

62. *The Old Bull* (in *Nine Modern Plays*); *Eldorado* (in *Eight Modern Plays*); *The Hordle Poacher* (in *Pattern Prose*, Part II., T.E.S., No. 108), by Bernard Gilbert.

SUSAN GLASPELL AND GEORGE CRAM  
COOK: TICKLESS TIME

The United States, like England, is now a country of amateur dramatic societies and "little theatres," and many of these are doing excellent work, but on one count at least the Provincetown Players, of Massachusetts, are unique among them all. They can proudly claim to have fostered the early efforts of the two outstanding American dramatists of to-day—Eugene O'Neill and Susan Glaspell. And Miss Edna St. Vincent Millay, who acted in the first performance of *Tickless Time*, is a poet and dramatist of high promise.

There is no space here to write of Mr. O'Neill, who is widely acknowledged in America and Europe as a great dramatist. The work of Miss Glaspell, hardly

less interesting, certainly does not rank so high—though it is to be hoped that she is only at the beginning of her career. With George Cram Cook, whom she afterwards married, she helped to found the Provincetown Players in 1915, and since then she has written about a dozen plays in all, half of them one-act plays. *Tickless Time* shows her customary skill as a dramatist, but is not representative of her peculiar talent, because it is light-hearted comedy. Her tragedies are given distinction, and at the same time limited in their range and appeal, by her passionate idealism and her explorations of the borderland of human experience, as in *Inheritors* and *The Verge*. She has published several tensely-wrought novels, and *The Path to the Temple*, a remarkable biography of her husband which is worthy of that remarkable man.

#### FOR DISCUSSION

63. Do you agree that *Tickless Time* is a comedy, or would you describe it as a farce? Is it satirical?

64. This play has been described as very sophisticated: do you agree? Are the authors ever in earnest?

65. Which is the most amusing speech in the play, and which is the most subtle?

#### FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

66. Say briefly what you think of Ian Joyce, or write a brief defence of Eddy Knight's point of view.

67. Comment seriously on this passage of dialogue: "But, Eloise, do you mean to say . . . a clock of the human mind" (page 134).

68. After thinking it over carefully, form clear pictures of Eddy Knight and Ian Joyce in your mind, and then describe their appearance. (This is the right method; the wrong one is to make up your picture piecemeal as you write.)

69. This play can be performed in England just as it is; or anglicized by making a few alterations in the dialogue, and substituting an English town for Province-

town. This would make all the figures with regard to differences of time inaccurate, however. If Provincetown becomes Falmouth, what would the correct figures be ?

#### FURTHER READING

70. *Trifles*, and *Inheritors*, by Susan Glaspell. (For studies of American drama of to-day see *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day*, Vol. II., by A. H. Quinn, and *A Study of the Modern Drama*, by Barrett H. Clark.)

71. *The Mulligatawny Medallion*, by Barrington Gates ; *The Little Man*, by John Galsworthy (in *Nine Modern Plays*, T.E.S.) ; *Wurzel-Flummery*, by A. A. Milne ; *Grand Guignol* (in *What's Wrong with the Drama*), by H. F. Rubinstein.

#### JOHN DRINKWATER: $X=0$

With the production of *Abraham Lincoln* in 1918, Mr. John Drinkwater suddenly achieved fame and success—although *Abraham Lincoln* is a very good play. For some years before this, however, he was known to a smaller audience as a poet and poet-dramatist of quiet sincerity. With a friend of his, who is now Sir Barry Jackson, he founded the Pilgrim Players while he was still an insurance clerk, and it was from amateur acting and producing that he graduated as a dramatist. The amateur organization became in time the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, which still happily flourishes in its native city and in London, and has put many a good play on the stage. So from the first Mr. Drinkwater was a man of the theatre as well as a poet. "My affections have never been divided between poetry and the drama," he writes in the Preface to his *Collected Plays* (1925). "For some time in the early years at Birmingham it was an ambition to help as far as one could towards the restoration of the two upon the stage in union. I remember that John Galsworthy warned me that

the shadow of the man Shakespeare was across the path of all who should attempt verse drama in these days. The experience of *Rebellion*, a three-act play in blank verse, 1914, showed me that, in that direction at least, he was right. . . . The one-act plays in verse . . . were attempts to find some other constructional idiom whereby verse might be accepted as a natural thing by a modern audience. That two of them at least have been in more or less continual performance since they were written suggests that there was something in the method. . . . The transition from verse to prose, from  $X=0$ , that is, to *Abraham Lincoln*, was not a surrender. . . . The problem to be solved was how to keep in the sparest prose idiom something of the enthusiasm and poignancy of verse. In the days when verse was the natural speech of the theatre, its beauty, like the beauty of all fine style, reached the audience without any insistence upon itself. The guiding principle of the speech of these plays later than  $X=0$  has been, so far as I could manage it, to make it beautiful without letting anybody know about it."

*Abraham Lincoln*, *Oliver Cromwell* and the other chronicle plays are certainly not a surrender, for though they have a wider, more human appeal, they keep the nobility of  $X=0$  and the author's earlier poetic plays.

#### FOR DISCUSSION

72. Which is the more important in this play, plot, or ideas, or characterization? Mr. Drinkwater says that he passed from verse to prose—not from poetry to prose. What is the difference?

73. Does the play gain or lose by being written in verse, and in what way? Do you think that, as the author seems to suggest, the play has a beauty of speech which is too self-insistent to be readily acceptable nowadays? Why is a modern audience much less inclined to accept verse than the mixed and partly illiterate audience of the Elizabethan theatre?

## FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

74. What is the meaning of the title ?
75. This play was written and produced in 1917. Is there any significance in the date? Why did the dramatist choose so remote a period as the Trojan War ?
76. "Tragedy, in its effect, is a state of an audience's mind, a painless sense of the pressure of somebody's pain; a sense, too, that quickens your wits; you are given a new range of sight, such as griefs of your own sometimes bring, but no shock, like griefs, to numb you past using it. Stirred in that way, you can understand anything; hints go all lengths with you."—C. E. Montague. How far do you agree with this, and how far can it be applied to  $X=0$  ?

## FURTHER READING

77. *Collected Plays of John Drinkwater* (see page 222)—especially *Abraham Lincoln*, *Oliver Cromwell*, and *Pawns* (one-act plays: *The Storm*, *The God of Quiet*,  $X=0$ ), which are obtainable in separate editions.
78. *Allison's Lad*, by B. M. Dix (in *Nine Modern Plays*); *In Safety*, by Margaret Macnamara.

## MARGARET MACNAMARA: ELIZABETH REFUSES

In *Debts and Credits* Mr. Rudyard Kipling has recently given us a good story about a group of soldiers on the Western Front, whose devotion to Miss Austen made them almost a secret society. Admiration such as this her work has constantly claimed from a multitude of readers for a hundred years, and the reason is not far to seek. Though she wrote only half a dozen novels, and all are limited to comedy of the tea-table and the ballroom, her humour is so subtle, her characterization so convincing, her craftsmanship so skilful, that she ranks with the greatest English novelists.

Readers who have not yet made the acquaintance of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and the others, have still a great pleasure to come, and will find it all the greater if they read the novels in the editions so delightfully illustrated by Hugh Thomson, whose gift for delicately humorous characterization is little inferior to Miss Austen's.

Perhaps it is this quiet subtlety in humour and characterization which has kept the novels from being much dramatized, for the theatre is a notoriously dangerous place for subtlety, but Miss Macnamara has dared greatly, and succeeded. With a touch as rare as the novelist's, she has taken incidents scattered through the novel and moulded them into this charming little comedy. Like many others of Miss Macnamara's plays it has long been a favourite with amateur dramatic societies, for it is as easy to stage as it is well worth doing.

#### FOR DISCUSSION

79. Does the humour of this play arise chiefly from characterization or from plot? How does it compare in this respect with *The New Wing at Elsinore* and *Tickless Time*?

80. Get Hugh Thomson's edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, and see if you can recognize in his illustrations the characters of the play.

81. When is Mr. Collins most amusing?

82. What do you learn about the speakers from the following speeches:

*Mrs. Bennet*. Don't nag at me, Jane! (Page 160.)

*Mr. Collins*. To fortune I am indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature upon your father, since I am well aware it could not be complied with. On that head I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married. (Page 168.)

*Lady Catherine*. . . . I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet! I send no compliments to your mother! I am most seriously displeased! (Page 178)

83. Invent another title for the play.

## FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

84. Would you describe Lady Catherine as vulgar ?

85. Write the letter in which Mr. William Collins announced to Mr. Bennet his intention of coming to stay with the Bennet family. Don't forget to mention the patronage of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and imitate Mr. Collins's style as closely as you can. When you have finished compare your letter with that in *Pride and Prejudice*, Chapter XIII.

86. Compare the play with Chapters XIII., XVI., XIX., XX., XXIX., and LVI. of *Pride and Prejudice*, and comment on the alterations which have been made.

87. Describe the character of Mr. Collins or Mrs. Bennet ; or contrast Elizabeth with Jane.

88. After thinking it over carefully, form clear pictures of Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins in your mind, and then describe their appearance.

## FURTHER READING

89. *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen, illustrated by Hugh Thomson ; *In Safety, The Tall, Tall Castle, The Witch*, by Margaret Macnamara.

90. *Followers*, by Harold Brighouse ; *Becky Sharp*, by Olive Conway ; *The Spinsters of Lushe*, by Philip Johnson (in *Four Modern Plays*).

## LAURENCE HOUSMAN: BROTHER WOLF

Mr. Laurence Housman is a writer of talent and versatility, who has ranged from mystical poetry and fairy tales to poetic tragedy, social comedy, and religious plays. The scene-designs which decorate the *Little Plays of St. Francis* are reminders that he has several times illustrated his own books, and has had considerable experience as an amateur actor and producer. Probably he is most widely known by *Prunella*, the delicate fantasy which he wrote with Mr. Granville Barker, for it has been repeatedly acted



by amateurs and broadcasted more than once. His best work, however, is in *Angels and Ministers*, one-act plays introducing Queen Victoria, Gladstone, and other "eminent Victorians," which are masterpieces of ironic comedy. Close to these rank the *Little Plays of St. Francis*, a cycle of eighteen one-act plays which present in comedy and tragedy the life and death of Francis of Assisi. Their mingling of humour with sincere religious feeling, and their quiet skill in dialogue and characterization, have made them popular with readers as well as amateur actors. *Brother Wolf* is typical.

In recent times there has been a revival of interest in St. Francis (1182-1226), the "little poor man" of Assisi, whose gay courage and passionate faith made him one of the greatest of Christian saints, a figure full of significance for our own times. The *Little Plays of St. Francis* are a part of that revival, and a part also of the recent return of English drama to its birthplace, the parish church.

#### FOR DISCUSSION

91. Does *Brother Wolf* gain or lose by the touches of humour?

92. Is the play completely convincing? If not, where are the weaknesses?

93. At what point does the play reach its climax?

94. What impresses you most in the character of Francis?

95. "These be not sane men!" says Lupo. Do you, like Brother Juniper, agree?

#### FOR DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION

96. Compare Francis with the Bishop in *The Bishop's Candlesticks*.

97. Compare *Brother Wolf* with any other religious play which you know, or with *A Fool and His Money*, by Laurence Housman.

98. Describe briefly the character of Brother Juniper or Lupo.

99. The story of "Brother Wolf" which follows is taken from Chapter XXI. of Mr. Thomas Okey's translation of *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*. These tales of St. Francis were written down long after his death, many of them having been preserved only *by oral tradition* among his devoted followers. Comment on the differences between the play and the legend.

"In the days when St. Francis abode in the city of Gubbio, a huge wolf, terrible and fierce, appeared in the neighbourhood, and not only devoured animals but men also; in such wise that all the citizens went in great fear of their lives, because oftentimes the wolf came close to the city. And when they went abroad, all men armed themselves as were they going forth to battle; and even so none who chanced on the wolf alone could defend himself; and at last it came to such a pass that for fear of this wolf no man durst leave the city walls. Wherefore St. Francis had great compassion for the men of that city, and purposed to issue forth against that wolf, albeit the citizens, with one accord, counselled him not to go. But he, making the sign of the holy cross, and putting all his trust in God, set forth from the city with his companions; but they fearing to go farther, St. Francis went his way alone towards the place where the wolf was. And lo! the said wolf, in the sight of much folk that had come to behold the miracle, leapt towards St. Francis with gaping jaws; and St. Francis drawing nigh, made to him the sign of most holy cross and called him, speaking thus, 'Come hither, friar wolf; I command thee in the name of Christ that thou do hurt neither to me nor to any man' Marvellous to tell! no sooner had St. Francis made the sign of holy cross than the terrible wolf closed his jaws and stayed his course; no sooner was the command uttered than he came, gentle as a lamb, and laid himself at the feet of St. Francis. Then St. Francis speaks to him thus, 'Friar wolf, thou workest much evil in these parts, and hast wrought grievous ill, destroying and slaying God's creatures without His leave; and not only hast thou slain and devoured the beasts of the field, but thou hast dared to destroy and

slay men made in the image of God ; wherefore thou art worthy of the gallows as a most wicked thief and murderer : all folk cry out and murmur against thee, and all this city is at enmity with thee. But, friar wolf, fain would I make peace with them and thee, so that thou injure them no more ; and they shall forgive thee all thy past offences, and neither man nor dog shall pursue thee more.' Now when St. Francis had spoken these words, the wolf, moving his body and his tail and his ears, and bowing his head, made signs that he accepted what had been said, and would abide thereby. Then said St. Francis, ' Friar wolf, since it pleaseth thee to make and observe this peace, I promise to obtain for thee, so long as thou livest, a continual sustenance from the men of this city, so that thou shalt no more suffer hunger, for well I ween that thou hast wrought all this evil to satisfy thy hunger. But after I have won this favour for thee, friar wolf, I desire that thou promise me to do hurt neither to man nor beast. Dost thou promise me this ?' And the wolf bowed his head and gave clear token that he promised these things. And St. Francis said, ' Friar wolf, I desire that thou pledge thy faith to me to keep this promise, that I may have full trust in thee.' And when St. Francis held forth his hand to receive this pledge, the wolf lifted up his right paw and gently laid it in the hand of St. Francis, giving him thereby such token of good faith as he could. Then said St. Francis, ' Friar wolf, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come with me ; fear naught, and we will go and confirm this peace in the name of God.' And the wolf, obedient, set forth by his side even as a pet lamb ; wherefore when the men of the city beheld this, they marvelled greatly."

## FURTHER READING

100. *Little Plays of St. Francis, A Fool and His Money, Angels and Ministers*, by Laurence Housman ; *Prunella*, by Laurence Housman and Granville Barker.

101. *The Bishop's Candlesticks*, by Norman McKinnel (in *Nine Modern Plays*) ; *The Only Legend*, by John Drinkwater ; *In Safety*, by Margaret Macnamara ; *A Man of Ideas*, by Miles Malleson (in *Four Modern Plays*).

## ON DRAMA IN GENERAL

102. A friend of yours who has not read this book has asked you which of the plays you like best. Write a letter to him, answering his question and giving him as clear an idea of the play as you can. This means that you have not only to outline the story of the play, but to deal with characterization, style, and distinctive merits and defects.

103. Compare any play in this book with any other one-act play which you know.

104. Write a short criticism of any modern play which you have seen performed lately. Deal with the play, the acting, and the stage settings, and remember that criticism involves appreciation of the good as well as the bad points. You will find it helpful to read notices by dramatic critics in good newspapers.

105. In what way does *Thirty Minutes in a Street* differ in structure from all the other plays in this book?

106. The one-act play is almost ignored by professional theatres, but valued by "little theatres" and amateur dramatic societies. How do you explain this?

107. Which character in the plays do you find most interesting, and why?

108. Describe any amusing incident in the plays.

109. "A drama must be shaped so as to have a spire of meaning. Every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day. Such is the moral that exhales from plays like *Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*."—John Galsworthy.

Does Mr. Galsworthy give "moral" the meaning which it usually has? If not, what meaning does he give it? Do you agree with him? Which plays in this book would be most likely to meet with his approval?

110. After careful consideration of the plays which you know, write short definitions of tragedy, comedy, fantasy, farce, and melodrama, giving examples from this collection if possible. Then, if you can get the book, read the chapter on The Varieties of Drama, in *Drama*, by Ashley Dukes Home University Library.

111. How does a one-act play differ from a full-

length play? What are the distinctive possibilities and limitations of the one-act play?

112. Is *X=0* a one-act play?

113. What are the chief differences between a one-act play and a short story?

114. What are the dramatic unities? Are they often observed in modern drama? Are they more often observed in the one-act play than in the long play?

115. One of the most difficult problems for a dramatist lies in the exposition, the business of introducing his characters, and explaining the state of affairs, because this has to be made as natural and interesting as possible. Audiences no longer accept cheerfully the housemaid who soliloquizes and dusts the furniture for ten minutes after the curtain goes up.

116. On the question of exposition, compare *Colombine* with *Brother Wolf*, and contrast them both with *The House with the Twisty Windows*.

117. After exposition, or interwoven with it, comes the complication, in which "the plot thickens" and the audience is presented with a conflict or problem arising from the clash of character and motive and from the tangle of circumstance. A desire to see how the conflict will end and the problem be solved deepens the interest of the audience, till the play reaches its climax—its highest level of emotion. Which play in this book has the most powerful climax, and when does it occur?

118. The *dénouement*, or final unravelling of the plot, follows closely upon the climax in most one-act plays.

Sometimes climax and *dénouement* come together a moment before the curtain falls. Does this happen in *The House with the Twisty Windows*, *Moonshine*, or *Mrs. Adis*?

119. Sometimes there is more than one climax, as in *X=0*. Which is the major climax in this play?

120. Suspense and surprise are often important factors in maintaining interest. Climaxes might be divided into those which involve surprise and those which fulfil expectation. There are instances of both in this book: can you find them?

121. The paragraphs above have dealt only with structure, but there are other equally important elements in a good play—notably characterization, dialogue, and atmosphere.

It has been well said that a play cannot rise above the level of its characterization (though there may be many fine plays of the second rank in which poetry or humour counts for more), for it is in presenting real men and women that a play comes most vitally into contact with life. Pure farce and melodrama, for instance, have nothing to say about life at all, and we feel their inferiority to comedy and tragedy however much we enjoy them as entertainments.

122. In which plays in this book are the men and women most fully alive, and in which plays does characterization count least?

123. "The primary magic of the theatre is the spoken word," says Mr. Frank Vernon. What qualities make good dialogue, and how does it differ from the language of a novel? Compare the dialogue of *X=0* and *The New Wing at Elsinore* with that of *Moonshine* and *Elizabeth Refuses*.

124. What atmosphere does the dramatist seek to convey in *The House with the Turnsty Windows*? Does she succeed? If so, how?

125. Arrange the names of the following dramatists in chronological order, and give nationalities:

Shakespeare, Shaw, Sheridan, Eugene O'Neill, Euripides, Molière, Goethe, Æschylus, Goldsmith, Calderon, Ibsen, Congreve, Marlowe, Synge, Jonson, Terence, Tchekhov, Pirandello, Goldoni, Racine.

126. Who wrote the following plays?—*The School for Scandal*, *Strife*, *The Pretenders*, *The Master Builder*, *The Coming of Christ*, *Dramatic Sequels*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Dear Brutus*, *Charley's Aunt*, *The Green Goddess*, *The Lost Silk Hat*, *Trifles*, *Harold*, *St. Joan*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Quality Street*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Juno and the Paycock*, *Pompey the Great*, *Prunella*, *Strafford*, *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *The Duenna*, *Countess Cathleen*, *Milestones*, *The Little Man*, *Riders to the Sea*, *Campbell of Kilmohr*, *Hobson's Choice*, *The Emperor Jones*, *R.U.R.*, *The Riding to Lithend*, *The Critic*.

127. Write down the titles and authors of the plays in which the following characters appear:

Desdemona, Derrick Moore, Alcestis, Silvermoon, Maurya, Dugald Stewart, Matryona, Charles Surface, Beatrice Cenci, Gratiano, Jourdain, Mrs. Hardcastle,

Mephistopheles, Catherine Parr, Rosalind, Mrs. Malaprop, Edward II, King Lear, Cardinal Wolsey, Sir John Falstaff, Abraham Lincoln, Crichton, Cato, Banquo, Knowell, Catiline, Ian Joyce, Charles I., Captain Hook, Horatio, Lady Windermere, Deirdre, Cleopatra, Elizabeth Bennet, Mary Rose, Titania, Falder, John Anthony.

128. Which plays in this book would you choose as most suitable for performance (1) at your school speech day; (2) at a school concert, given at the end of the Christmas term; (3) by Form IV.; (4) by a Scout Troop; and (5) by a branch of the League of Nations Union? Explain the reasons for your choice in each case.

129. Draw up from this book a programme of two, three, or four plays (according to the number of actors available) for performance by your own form or society. Choose and arrange the plays carefully, to give the programme artistic harmony and unity, which is not very easily done. Then cast the plays, giving every person available the part for which he or she is most suited, omitting no one, and in a very few cases giving two parts to one player if this proves necessary. A play which cannot be fairly well cast should not be put in the programme.

130. When you have drawn up this programme of plays, write a short prologue for it in rhymed verse.

131. Which part would you choose for yourself in your programme, and why?

132. Which plays in this book would you describe as "realistic," and which as "poetic"? Discuss the meaning of the terms before you decide, and remember that a play need not be written in verse to be poetic in spirit.

133. "Drama and Theatre are two who should be one. Their union is the task of every stage that is truly awakened to consciousness. They should be one and yet remain two; a marriage must be sought if they are to beget a true theatrical art. All the allurements expressed in the word theatre—the eager expectancy of the audience and its natural love of colour and movement, the players' swift exaltation, the designer's craft of transient illusion, even the musician's harmonies and the dancer's rhythms—beckon toward the figure we know as drama, who should be the impersonation of ardent conflict, but is often the image of intellectual aloofness or stoical indifference. The match is not easily arranged,

for the minx called Theatre flaunts her paint-box and powder-puff too freely, while the austere grey-beard Drama gathers his dignified robe about him and expresses a conventional distaste for things 'theatrical.' Grave incompatibilities of temperament are evident at a glance ; but unless the union be consummated, neither theatre nor drama can fulfil a natural purpose. A lifeless drama, echoing the small talk of daily currency, has its counterpart in a lifeless theatre whose actors reproduce the gestures of daily commonplace ; but a living drama, born of thought and passion and fancy, calls for a living theatre that shall interpret as well as represent."—Ashley Dukes.

Comment on this passage. It is a valuable reminder that a play does not fully exist as a play until it is acted before an audience. The dramatist's importance, which is being hotly debated nowadays, may be paramount, but when a play is produced we must include among the contributors, or collaborators, the actor, the producer and others—and the spectator.

134. There are sections on the writing of one-act plays in *Nine Modern Plays* and (more elementary) in *Eight Modern Plays*, and some valuable advice in *Pattern Plays*, edited by E. C. Oakden and Mary Sturt (T.E.S. 20), an interesting collection which contains stories, plays made from stories, and other stories to be made into plays. For those who wish to study the subject in detail there are many books, notably *How to Write a Play*, by St. John Ervine, and *Dramatic Technique*, by G. P. Baker. A very full bibliography of this and many other dramatic subjects will be found in Barrett Clark's *A Study of the Modern Drama*.

But it is possible to know too much of technique, and lose the spirit of life in anxiety to understand and obey the letter of the law. There is no text-book so good as the plays of great dramatists, seen on the stage whenever possible ; no tools are so potent as imagination and sincerity ; and the only true laboratory is the theatre. It is by giving the young dramatist the opportunity to see his plays acted, and to recognize his weaknesses and try again, that amateur dramatic societies are doing much for English drama. As for the raw material, life offers it in such infinite abundance that the dramatist of insight and imagination will never lack a subject, very



often finding his highest inspiration in the common life about him.

### A SUGGESTION FOR FORM-ROOM ACTING

Elect leaders from the form, and make each of them responsible for one of the plays which you wish to act. Having decided how many players are needed for each play, the leaders, taking turns, choose their companies from the form, and then each company prepares a "performance" of its play, to be given with the rest of the form as audience. The leader should act as producer in the preliminary rehearsal or rehearsals, and assign parts and positions on the stage, and suggest movements, etc.

The performances can be very simple, with all the actors reading their parts, or they can be more elaborate, with some of the parts learned by heart and costumes improvised or borrowed. In any case, simple properties and stage furniture are a great help. Plays acted in this way can be very enjoyable, and there is the advantage that if the rehearsals can be held in a large room or in the open air, all the plays can be rehearsed at the same time. During rehearsals the teacher can visit each group in turn, and after the performances he can invite criticisms, favourable and unfavourable, from the audience before he gives his own opinion.

### A READING LIST

#### OF MODERN ENGLISH PLAYS AND BOOKS ON THE DRAMA

*(This list is limited to plays and books which can be recommended for inclusion in a school library. A first choice is indicated by asterisks.)*

#### I—PLAYS

J. M. SYNGE: *Plays*.\* Allen and Unwin.

This volume contains all Synge's plays: *The Shadow of the Glen*, *Riders to the Sea*, *The Well of the Saints*, *The Tinker's Wedding*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, and *Deirdre of the Sorrows*.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: *St. Joan*,\* *Captain Brass-*

*bound's Conversion*,\* *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, *Candida*,  
*John Bull's Other Island*, *Major Barbara*, *You Never  
 Can Tell*. Constable.

JOHN GALSWORTHY: *Strife*,\* *Justice*, *The Foundations*,  
*Loyalties*. Duckworth.

J. M. BARRIE: *The Admirable Crichton*,\* *Quality Street*,  
*Dear Brutus*, *Peter Pan*, *The Twelve Pound Look* and  
*Other Plays* \* (*The Will*, *Rosalind*, and *Pantaloon*).  
 Hodder and Stoughton.

JOHN MASEFIELD: *The Tragedy of Nan*,\* *Pompey the  
 Great*. Heinemann. Sidgwick and Jackson.

JOHN DRINKWATER: *Collected Plays*, Vol. II. Sidgwick  
 and Jackson.

This contains *Abraham Lincoln*,\* *Oliver Cromwell*,  
*Robert E. Lee*, and *Little Johnny*. (Vol. I. contains *Mary  
 Stuart* and the verse plays, including *X=0*, *The Storm*,  
 and *Cophetua*.)

GRANVILLE BARKER: *The Voysey Inheritance*. Sidgwick  
 and Jackson.

W. B. YEATS: *Countess Cathleen*,\* *The Land of Heart's  
 Desire*.\* Fisher Unwin. *Cathleen ni  
 Houlihan*, *Deirdre*, *A Pot of Broth* (in *Plays in  
 Prose and Verse*). Macmillan.

LADY GREGORY: *Seven Short Plays*. Putnam.

Irish dialect plays, five of them comedies: *The Goal  
 Gate*, *Hyacinth Halvey*, *The Jackdaw*, *The Rising of the  
 Moon*, *Spreading the News*, *The Travelling Man*, *The  
 Workhouse Ward*.

LORD DUNSANY: *Plays of Gods and Men*. Putnam.

Contains: *The Tents of the Arabs*, *The Laughter of the  
 Gods*, *The Queen's Enemies*, *A Night at an Inn*

SEAN O'CASEY: *The Plough and the Stars*. Macmillan.

HAROLD BRIGHOUSE: *Hobson's Choice*. Samuel French.

ARNOLD BENNETT and EDWARD KNOBLOCK: *Milestones*.\*

ARNOLD BENNETT: *The Great Adventure*. Methuen.  
 (One volume, cloth binding).

LAURENCE HOUSMAN: *Angels and Ministers*. Jonathan  
 Cape. *Little Plays of St. Francis*. Sidgwick  
 and Jackson.

LAURENCE HOUSMAN and GRANVILLE BARKER: *Prunella*.  
 Sidgwick and Jackson.

ALLAN MONKHOUSE : *The Conquering Hero*. Benn.

A. A. MILNE : *The Truth about Blayds* (in *Three Plays*) ;  
*The Romantic Age* (in *Second Plays*). Chatto and  
Windus.

JOHN BRANDANE : *The Glen is Mine*. Constable.

ROBERT GRAVES : *John Kemp's Wager*. Blackwell.

A folk-song ballad-opera.

ELIZABETH BAKER : *Chains*. Sidgwick and Jackson.

H. F. RUBINSTEIN : *What's Wrong with the Drama?*  
Benn.

Five witty one-act comedies.

A. J. TALBOT : *The Iron Duke*. Benn.

A chronicle play of Wellington.

## II.—HISTORY AND CRITICISM

*A Study of Modern Drama*.\* Barrett H. Clark. Apple-  
ton. Revised edition, 1928.

"A handbook for the study and appreciation of the best plays, European, English, and American, of the last half-century." It is an encyclopædia of information and ideas, and particularly useful in schools and reading circles because it sets out to arouse discussion and suggest lines of thought. Very full bibliographies and indexes.

*British Drama*. Allardyce Nicoll. Harrap, 1925. Illus-  
trated.

"An historical survey from the beginnings to the present time." A third of this invaluable book, which is the best of its kind, is devoted to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

*Modern Drama*.\* J. W. Marriott. Nelson.

An illuminating account of drama in England, Europe, and America, from T. W. Robertson and Ibsen to James Bridie, Noel Coward, Elmer Rice, Capek, Quintero, etc. A guide to all the most interesting plays. (The "Little Theatre" Series.)

*Drama.\** Ashley Dukes. Home University Library, 1926.

A stimulating book of unusual scope, with chapters on the Nature and Varieties of Drama, the Dramatist, the Actor, the Producer, the Scene, the Playhouse, the Audience, and Drama Present and Future.

*Twentieth Century Literature.* A. C. Ward. Methuen, 1928.

A very useful and interesting survey of "The Age of Interrogation, 1901-1925." Fifty pages of the book are given to "Dramatists."

*The Old Drama and the New.* William Archer. Heinemann, 1923.

This survey of English drama, which offers much vigorous and unhackneyed criticism, is an excellent companion to Professor Nicoll's *British Drama*.

*On the Art of the Theatre.\** Edward Gordon Craig. Heinemann, 1921. Illustrated.

This great theatre artist's books are full of original and inspiring ideas. Illustrations of dresses and stage-settings.

*Dramatic Values.* C. E. Montague. Methuen.

Essays in dramatic criticism, on such subjects as Good Acting, Improvements in Play-making, etc., and on the plays of Synge, Shaw, Wilde, Masfield, and Ibsen. The work of a good writer and critic, full of gusto and a fine discrimination.

## ACTING NOTES

THESE brief notes on the plays in this collection are intended for those who know little or nothing of the art of dramatic production. There are several excellent books for the amateur, which teach as much as it is possible to teach of any art in a book, and it is not proposed to attempt to write a complete guide in this limited space, but to attempt instead what none of the books give—a detailed and dogmatic account of the production of a particular play, *The House with the Twisty Windows*. The notes on the other plays, suggestive, not exhaustive, will be merely supplementary to this account.

### THE HOUSE WITH THE TWISTY WINDOWS

We will assume that this play has been chosen because it can be cast fairly well from the actors available, offers a fairly large number of parts (for a one-act play), is not difficult or expensive to dress and stage, and—most important of all—it is worth doing.

*The Producer.*—When the society has organized its activities and finances—and in this the books recommended on page 248 will be found helpful—the producer must set to work, and his first duty is to acquire a full understanding of the play and the characters.

The producer is to the play what the conductor is to the orchestra. He is responsible for the artistic harmony and unity of the play in all its details. He must have the final decision in all matters affecting this artistic harmony, and upon his tact and energy and enthusiasm, his knowledge and imagination, his willingness to learn and to experiment, the success of the play will depend to a very large extent.

The producer can make himself a very useful prompt-book by tearing up two copies of the play and sticking

the leaves on alternate pages in an exercise-book. This provides ample room for diagrams showing position of characters, and notes on movement, lighting, etc. During the performance it can be handed over to the stage-manager, who will find it invaluable.

*Casting* is the first problem, whether it is done by a small committee or by the producer alone. In the case of untried actors, the best plan is to begin with auditions at which the candidates for parts can read in turn various characters in *The House with the Twisty Windows*. The casting authority can then decide, from voice, manner, and apparent acting potentialities, how the play is to be cast. Derrick Moore is the most important and most difficult character, and Heather and Charlie Clive come next: if these parts cannot be cast fairly well the company should look for another play.

Understudies are a valuable insurance against disaster, and some societies choose two casts, which work quite independently of each other and are responsible for alternate performances.

*Permission to perform the play* should be secured now, and this must always be done before rehearsals begin, because occasionally a play is not available for amateurs. For *The House with the Twisty Windows*, application must be made to the author's agents, Messrs Samuel French, 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, without whose written permission no performance may be given. The royalty for each performance is One Guinea, payable in advance. The society is bound in honour to pay the royalty on a copyright play, which is in many cases the chief source of the dramatist's income, and is simply a payment for the right to use his property. A dramatist should never be asked to waive his royalty because the performance is in aid of charity, for he prefers to choose for himself the charities to which he is to contribute. Such performances are good for charity and bad for amateur drama; they suggest that the latter is not on its own account worth paying to see.

*Business arrangements*, such as booking the hall, advertising the play, and distributing tickets, should be made well in advance. (*The House with the Twisty Windows* will not make a complete programme by itself: it takes about forty minutes to perform). Schools and some other educational institutions may get exemption

from the entertainment tax by application on the Form E.D.23, which can be obtained from the local Customs and Excise Office.

*The Stage.*—There is a great deal to be said for the stage which is simply set with screens or hung with curtains, and those amateurs who feel that they are not experts on this subject should certainly read some of the books recommended on page 249,—especially those by Mr Barrett H. Clark and Mr. Harold Ridge. At least, for those societies with no stage of their own, scenery is often an expense and trouble out of all proportion to its worth, and the more difficult the setting the more likely it is that the scenery will be artistically inferior to curtains. Hired scenery is nearly always anathema. It is bad enough to hire dresses, as most societies are compelled to do, for except in the case of a few well-known stock plays, this usually means that the dresses are pitchforked into the play by a costumer who knows little or nothing about it. In Utopia the setting and dresses for every production are specially designed by the producer, or by artists working in intimate collaboration with him; under the difficult conditions of most amateur dramatic work they should, at least, be specially adapted from the best material available whenever possible.

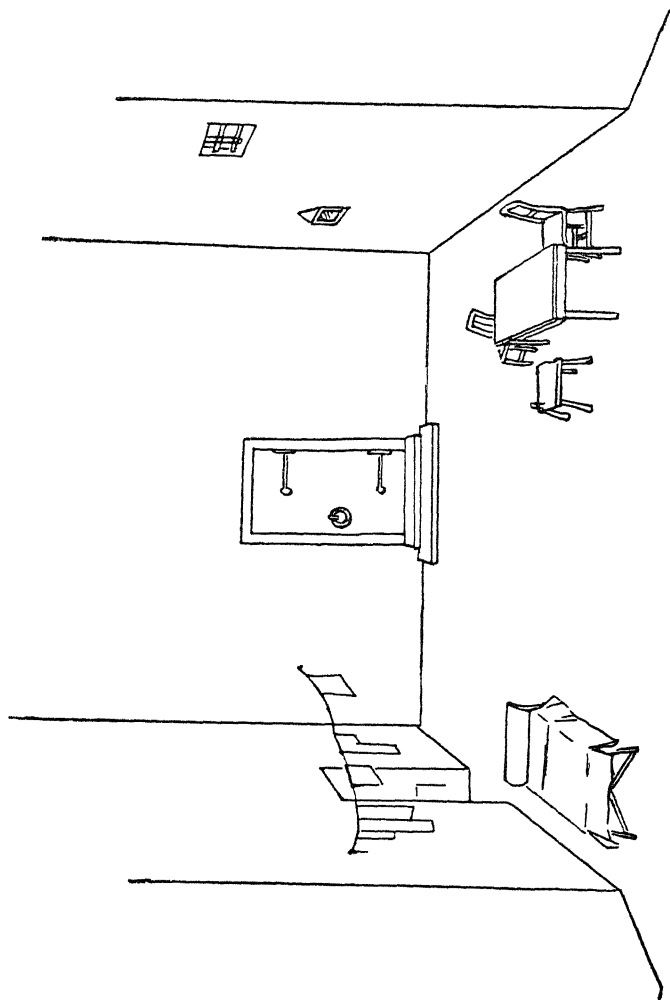
Fortunately for amateurs with limited resources, *The House with the Twisty Windows* demands a very bare and simple setting, as will be seen from the sketch on page 229. The door at the back cannot be omitted without loss to the play, but it presents no difficulty to any enthusiastic carpenter. It should be made entirely of wood—three-ply is much better than canvas as a covering for the framework—and as it becomes almost a symbol of the party's imprisonment, it should be large and look solid. If it is sturdy enough for Clive to throw himself against it, so much the better: if not, Roper must stop him before he reaches the door. It should open outwards, away from the audience, on to a dark "corridor." There must be no cross-bar at ground level to trip the actors. Keep the steps if possible. They are easy to make, and can be used repeatedly in different productions. No producer who has discovered the joy of working in three dimensions, to however limited an extent, will be willingly restricted to two dimensions.

With the door constructed the scenery can be com-

pleted with curtains or screens if desired, for the door on the left need be only an opening, and the barred window on the right is not essential. The line on which the clothes hang can be fastened to the framework of the door and the inside of the proscenium. If curtains are used they should be bare and not rich in appearance: hessian would do. Screens of three-ply wood on strong framework would do admirably for the walls, and should be roughly distempered in a dingy colour. The setting has to suggest a cellar which is a prison cell. Whatever is used for the walls, they must be made to stand firm, or some members of the audience will be less interested in the play than in discussing whether the walls are going to fall down. If curtains are used the mirror on the right wall must be small and light, so that it can be hung from a safety pin. If there is the least danger that it may flash light in the eyes of the audience, or give them untimely glimpses of activities behind the scenes, it should be very thinly smeared with vaseline. Any kitchen table and chairs will serve, provided that they are not too new and clean. If it is covered by the blankets, the bedstead may be a sturdy wooden framework; or long forms lashed side by side; or a group of butter-boxes, which are cheap, strong, and adaptable. The blankets should be worn and dilapidated if possible—old army blankets would do well—and one or two more, rolled up, would serve for the pillow.

*Lighting* is important, as in every play, but simple. It should not be brilliant, but strong enough to make the features of the actors plainly visible from the back of the hall. The stage switch should be near the door at the back, and if all the stage lighting, except the moonlight, can be temporarily controlled by this switch it will be decidedly an advantage. If not, the electrician must be able to see Clive touch the switch, in order to time his own actual switching-off of the light, and Clive must not remove his hand too quickly. To raise a laugh at this point by faulty timing would be extremely bad for the play. The moonlight which streams through the window and shines on the table demands only a sheet of gelatine and a small floodlight, or "spot," or a group of bulbs. The moonlight can be on throughout the play, or switched on, preferably with a dimmer switch, just before it is needed.





*Properties* for this play are not numerous or difficult. Underclothes to hang on the line. A small bottle for hair-dye. A plain tray with pieces of bread, a bowl of soup, and five smaller bowls. A salt-cellar. These properties and the stage furniture, or rough substitutes, are needed in rehearsal from the first.

*Effects*.—The bell which “clangs outside” should be loud and harsh: if it tinkles instead of clanging it will tend to destroy the prison atmosphere. The volley which ends the play can be supplied by O.T.C. rifles, starting-pistols, or the cheap “burglar alarm” pistols. The number required should be found by experiment: in a confined space behind the stage (but not too close to the audience) two will probably be enough.

Amateurs so often fail in making small effects convincing, and in timing them exactly, that it is necessary to emphasize their importance. The prompt-book already recommended is a great help to accurate timing, for which the stage manager is responsible, and careful planning and rehearsal are needed. The volley is all-important: to substitute for it some clumsy imitation such as the banging of a drum will probably ruin the play.

*Costumes* for the play must be considered as soon as rehearsals begin. Stepan may be dressed in a dark shirt, dark rough trousers, gum-boots, and a waist-belt with two pistols in it. The other characters wear ordinary English dress of to-day, and all, except Lady Ponting and Derrick Moore, must show signs of six weeks' imprisonment—which means, for instance, no creases in the men's trousers and no recently-acquired waves in the ladies' hair. (It may be noted in passing that the Village Drama Society, 15 Peckham Road, Camberwell, London, S.E.5, has a large number of historical and other costumes for hire at very low rates.)

*Rehearsal*.—While all these arrangements are being made, rehearsals of the play must begin, and these the producer controls.

The aim of the producer should be to present to the audience as fully and clearly, as beautifully or as humorously as possible, what it is that the dramatist has to say to them; every detail of acting, setting, and lighting should be regulated to this end. So the first thing to do is to study the play.

It will be seen that *The House with the Twisty Windows*

depends for its effect, first, upon the creation of an atmosphere of intense anxiety and nervous strain, and then, as usual in tragedy, upon the clear understanding and presentation of character. In both respects it will be found that the actors are strongly supported by the author's sound stagecraft, for *The House with the Twisty Windows* is essentially a good acting play. The atmosphere is skilfully created by dialogue and action from the very first, and no explanatory comment is needed. It may be necessary, however, to remind the players not to over-act: all the prisoners except Clive are struggling to maintain their self-control.

The characters are clearly drawn and strongly differentiated: every one of them provides a good part. There is a fine dramatic contrast between Roper and Clive, and Roper and Moore. The shrewd lawyer, strong, matter-of-fact, without imagination, stands between the boy whose imagination is too strong for his self-control, and the man whose imagination deepens his insight and sympathy without undermining his will-power. Roper naturally dominates the situation until Moore's entry, when he is as naturally superseded. Moore must be very carefully cast, for much depends upon this actor's ability in characterization and his power to hold an audience. If he has a natural Irish accent, or can imitate it from long familiarity, so much the better. If not, no accent at all is much better than a crude counterfeit, for Derrick Moore claims no relationship, however distant, with the venerable family of stage Irishmen who say "Begorra" and wear clay pipes in their hats.

Both Lady Ponting and Anne are fairly straightforward parts. Heather is much more difficult, and requires in the actress a sense of poetry and a delicacy of touch if she is to be childlike without being affectedly childish. Sincerity and poetic simplicity are the keynotes of her character, and of Moore's: both must avoid at all costs any suggestion of sentimentality.

An experienced producer often finds that, as he studies a play, the characters come to life and move visibly upon the stage of his imagination, so that much of the grouping is decided for him; but the producer for whom this does not happen must work out the movements required. When read with the stage-plan, the directions

given in the text make the most important movements clear. (The "left" and "right" are those of the audience, not of the actor.) Some producers determine every detail of movement, grouping, and gesture with a model stage and puppets before they begin rehearsing; others decide only upon the main outlines and fill in the details as they rehearse. The producer must work out his own artistic salvation in this as in many other matters, but at least he must go to the first rehearsal with entrances and exits and important stage movements clear in his mind and on his script. Stage-plans, showing the positions of the characters at important points in the action, are a great help to the beginner.

At the first rehearsal the only thing for the actors to do is to "read for position"—reading their parts without care for expression, and simply learning their movements. After this the actors should make themselves word-perfect as quickly as they can: it is a great mistake for actors, especially if they are young and inexperienced, to be set to learn their parts before rehearsals begin.

The play has then to be built up at successive rehearsals—twenty or more may be necessary—and when it is in mechanically good "going order" the producer can work for atmosphere, for all those little subtleties of intonation and movement which make the supreme difference between a living work of art and a mechanical performance.

The actors, as well as the producer, will have much to learn, and the latter should be prepared to give training in speech and movement if it is needed. Every word of the play must be audible to the audience in the back row of the hall, and this is a question not of shouting, but of correct pitch and clear enunciation. Speech should normally be as pleasant and natural as possible, without any elocution for elocution's sake.

Whenever the actors can reasonably do so, they should "aim" their words to go out into the auditorium. They must avoid passing in front of any one who is speaking; avoid distracting attention from him; stand still, when they do stand still, without being stiff and without shuffling about; and move definitely when they do move. All movements must be natural, or made to appear natural, and must contribute something to the play: they must not be merely obvious

devices for "changing the picture" The producer should do everything possible to encourage players to think themselves into their parts, to understand as fully as they can what they are doing and saying and feeling, and to *act all the while they are on the stage*, not merely while they are speaking. And they must learn to take their cues very promptly, so that there are no little gaps in the play between the speeches. Every actor should understand the entire play, and regard its success as a whole as a much more important thing than his individual success in his own part; though he must realize that his own part, however small, is vital to the whole. To buy only one book and provide each actor with a copy of his part alone is a very false and dangerous economy, since it prevents the actors from studying the play as a whole, besides being unfair to author and publisher. In some cases it is useful to have a preliminary fireside reading of the play to make sure that every one concerned does know and understand the whole play: the discussion which usually arises may be of the greatest value to both actors and producer.

*The Dress Rehearsal* should be a day or two days before the performance, and should be as much like a performance as possible, with full lighting, stage-setting, dresses, and make-up, and a small, select audience if desired. The producer should let the rehearsal go through without interruption or alteration, if these can possibly be avoided; but he may give a few words of final advice to the cast—especially (a) to keep the play going smoothly whatever happens in the performance, for it is astonishing what audiences will not notice if the players do not hesitate; (b) to stop speaking but continue acting when there is laughter, applause, or any such interruption; (c) apart from this, to ignore the audience entirely. If the actors are to take a "final curtain" this should be rehearsed, or it will almost certainly be muddled.

There is no need for any one to worry if the dress rehearsal is altogether miserable and depressing. Dress rehearsals often are; but if the play has been faithfully rehearsed it will spring into full life in the performance.

*Make-up* for *The House with the Twisty Windows* is not elaborate. For Stepan the chief item is the heavy black beard which an English audience expects a Russian to wear. The beard is made of crêpe hair "fluffed out,"

stuck on with spirit-gum, and then trimmed. This is very much better and cheaper than a ready-made beard. For the other characters a complete make-up, covering the whole face, neck, and ears, may not be required unless the stage-lighting is high

Make-up is a fascinating art, but not a mystery, and passable proficiency may soon be attained by studying one of the books recommended on page 249, and then experimenting on any victims who are available. One or two members of a dramatic society should be responsible for all make-ups, and should think them over well in advance, studying them from life as far as possible, after careful consideration of the characters and of the actors' faces. It must be remembered that in *The House with the Twisted Windows* all except Stepan are pale and harassed, Clive in particular, but Lady Ponting is obviously made-up and Moore shows less sign of strain than the other prisoners. Never use cheap grease-paint. The best is not expensive, and can be used without the least harm to the skin. The special blending-powder which does not change the colour of make-up is well worth getting, for powder of some kind must be used always to save the face from looking greasy.

At the dress rehearsal all make-up (and dresses) must be thoroughly scrutinized from more than one point in the auditorium.

Grease-paint can be wiped off with coco-butter or vaseline on a piece of rag. (A few yards of the cheapest butter-muslin are of the greatest use in the dressing-room.) Crêpe hair may be removed in the same way, or, more drastically, with methylated spirit.

*The Programme* should give the names of the actors in the order in which they appear or speak. This avoids any question of precedence, and is an aid to the audience in identifying characters.

*The Performance*.—In theory the producer's responsibility ends with the dress rehearsal, when it passes to the stage manager, who is responsible for the stage setting, furniture, properties, and so on. But the producer will be well advised to remain in the wings to deal with any emergency, and to keep the cast in good spirits. They may be comforted with the information that many experienced professional actors are always nervous before they go on.

The basis of efficient stage-management is a good prompt-book, fully and clearly annotated. Any changes in setting, furniture, lighting, etc., must be fully rehearsed, every member of the stage staff must know his work in detail beforehand, and all must wear shoes with rubber soles, so that they can move in silence.

The chief essentials for an artistic production are good team-work, imagination, enthusiasm, loyalty, and "an infinite capacity for taking pains." It will be noticed that wealth is not included. One of the most delightful things about amateur dramatic work is the fine results which may be obtained with slender means.

### THIRTY MINUTES IN A STREET

All applications for a licence to perform this play in the British Empire (except Canada) must be addressed to Messrs. Samuel French, Limited, 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London W C 2, or to their authorized representatives. No public performance may be given unless this licence has first been obtained. The fee for each performance of the play by amateurs is one guinea, payable in advance.

The play takes about thirty minutes in performance.

Farce is always very difficult for amateurs, more difficult than any other dramatic form except perhaps poetic tragedy, because it depends so much upon technical skill in acting, sureness of touch, and smoothness of performance. It is a common error of judgment to imagine that a play such as this is easier to act well than, say, *Elizabeth Refuses* or *Mrs Adis*. On the other hand, *Thirty Minutes in a Street* contains so many good lines and situations which are in themselves irresistibly funny on the stage, that an audience is certain to get a great deal of amusement from a performance which, as a whole, is an artistic failure. Moreover, the play provides splendid training in team work, and for many schools, at least, the unusually large number of characters will be an additional attraction.

*Thirty Minutes in a Street* is pre-eminently a "producer's play." On account of its episodic structure, smooth running without the least gap or delay is peculiarly essential and peculiarly difficult to secure; and

while speech, movement, and characterization must not be neglected, it is all-important to see that cues are taken instantly, and entrances and exits exactly timed. This is a question of fractions of a second, so that if the good work done in rehearsal is not to be lost in performance it is essential that from the first the stage should be marked out (if it cannot be set) in the dimensions of the final setting. As some speeches are very short, actors who find themselves in difficulty may have to learn the whole section in which they appear, and if this is done it must be seen that they do not repeat under their breath, with moving lips, the lines which other players are speaking. It is not only young players who are liable to develop this ruinous habit.

When the actors are word-perfect and the play is nicely timed and in good mechanical "going order," then producer and actors may confidently settle down to develop all those finer points of delivery and movement which bring a play to life.

The farcical possibilities of the play are too obvious to need detailed treatment, but a few warnings are suggested by amateur productions which the writer has seen. Make-up and dress should be amusing, but not too exaggerated. Special care must be given to the Visitor and Hostess, and to seeing that players up-stage are not masked by others at critical moments. The Old Lady must make quite sure that the audience understands what has happened to her petticoat, and to do this in a small hall without a raked floor it may be necessary for her to lift the petticoat waist-high, in her first desperate effort to get rid of it. To make sure that it drags after her it should be securely fastened by a tape, and the correct length for the tape must be found by experiment.

The theme of the play lies in the vain and pathetic efforts of the Stray Man to break into the egotistical pre-occupations of the passers-by. The production has to be "worked" to bring out this theme, which gives the play such unity as it possesses, or it will break up into a succession of farcical episodes.

The staging may appear difficult at first sight, but it can easily be simplified. If wooden flats, such as those recommended in the notes to *The House with the Twisty Windows*, can be built up to form a street with windows and doors, so much the better. And there should be steps



and railings. The producer with imagination will enjoy deciding on the kind of street which he wants, and giving it character. But with a few slight alterations in the play, the only essentials for the house-fronts are curtains and three doors.

The pillar-box can be constructed of thin three-ply wood curved round a strong framework, perhaps with old band-boxes as a basis ; or it can be made from a large oil-drum ; or it can be reduced, ingloriously, to a square pillar of " brickwork." But in any case it should stand firm, and be screwed to the floor with metal brackets.

### COLOMBINE

All applications for a licence to perform this play in the British Empire (except Canada) must be addressed to Messrs Samuel French, Limited, 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C 2, or to their authorized representatives. No public performance may be given unless this licence has first been obtained. The fee for each performance of the play by amateurs is thirty shillings, payable in advance.

The play takes about fifty-five minutes in performance.

The producer of *Colombine* will try to make the play as pretty and amusing as possible, with the minimum of sentimentality. The countrymen offer good and easy "character" parts. Colombine, Harlequin, and Pierrot are more difficult, demanding not only a sense of poetry and the ability to speak rhymed verse, but a deft and delicate touch. They have to remember that they are not human beings, but immortal wanderers from fairyland.

The light fantasy of the play is an excellent opportunity for actors and producers of imagination, and for lighting enthusiasts. It is true that the play demands a cyclorama, with beech trees in silhouette, to give it the right hillside spaciousness and the last glow of sunset fading into night ; but wonders can be done with a surround of dark curtains, and a little ingenuity and experiment with flood-light, spot light, and coloured gelatines, footlights being dimmed to the minimum or eliminated. For the final episode no light will be needed except that from the lantern, provided that this is bright, and carried so that it lights the faces of the two old men.

Small "floods" and "spots" are by no means expensive, and gelatines are cheap—cheaper in the long run, as well as more serviceable, than the old-fashioned method of staining electric bulbs. Those who cannot afford to buy lighting apparatus can experiment with groups of lights set in tin boxes and funnels, and no society should be content until it possesses at least two dimmer switches for the gradual raising and lowering of light. Mr. C. Harold Ridge, of the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, gives invaluable guidance and information in his books on stage-lighting (see page 249).

The dresses for *Colombine* may be the conventional ones, or specially designed variations of these. The play must not be overwhelmed with decoration, but it will gain much from pictorial treatment

### MOONSHINE

All applications for a licence to perform this play in the British Empire (except Canada) must be addressed to Messrs. Samuel French, Limited, 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W C 2, or to their authorized representatives. No public performance may be given unless this licence has first been obtained. The fee for each performance of the play by amateurs is one guinea, payable in advance

The play takes about fifteen minutes in performance.

*Moonshine* can be acted with the simplest equipment, for no front curtain is required, and the stage furniture can be reduced to an ordinary deal table and two kitchen chairs—or empty packing-cases. The background should be plain and rough; hessian curtains will do very well. The pencil sketch of a man hanging from a tree must be clearly recognizable from the back of the hall, and may be done with poster-colour (cheaper than drawing ink), or, say, a piece of cardboard torn out of a milliner's box.

If a more realistic setting is required, a simple "box-set" will provide it, but this play depends less on setting than any other in the book, except *The New Wing* at *Elsinore*.

The sound of the horses' hoofs can be imitated by striking the two halves of an empty coco-nut shell on the floor.

The most important thing in this play is the characterization of Luke Hazy : the audience must be convinced of his childlike simplicity of mind, with its unquestioning acceptance of old standards of conduct, and its touch of superstition. There must be a clear contrast in voice, manner, and dress between him and Jim Dunn, the contrast between unsophisticated peasant and sophisticated townsman. Luke's speech must suggest the peasant, but American accent is not essential for either character, and, as in the case of Derrick Moore, no accent at all is very much better than a clumsy theatrical imitation. The keynote of the play is quiet realism.

### THE NEW WING AT ELSINORE

No public performance of this play may be given unless permission has first been obtained from Messrs. Martin Secker, 7 John Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C.1. The fee is one guinea, with a reduction for a number of performances.

The play takes about ten to fifteen minutes in performance.

*The New Wing at Elsinore* will gain less from stage-performance than any other play in this book, for it was written primarily to be read. But with an audience who know *Hamlet* well enough to appreciate the "sequel" fully, it is worth performing and very good fun.

The actors should show no consciousness of the burlesque, but play their parts with due solemnity, except that the "best Elizabethan manner" of the clowns is a fatuous affectation of humour. The ghosts' voices are of the sepulchral variety. The whole art of burlesque lies in deciding exactly how far it should be over-acted.

The players should retain the traditional Hamlet dresses \* and make-up, and Horatio needs a large wrist-watch. Lighting should be fairly dim. Staging can be very simple, for dark curtains will be quite adequate. A stool will do for the Ghost to sit on in Scene 1. As the play is so short it is very important that there should be

\* Full directions, with diagrams, for making all the dresses needed for Shakespeare's plays are given in *The Bankside Costume Book*, by Melicent Stone (Wells Gardner, Darton. This is a very useful little book.

no wait between the scenes. The curtain can go up again almost instantly if the Ghost walks off with his stool and the Clowns are ready in the wings with a barrow-load of bricks. They can run this on and begin building up the bricks well down stage, with comic "business" of their own invention. The New Wing which Horatio invites Fortinbras to admire is in the auditorium. Or the play can be performed without a front curtain, in which case the Ghost's exit with his stool under his arm will be an added touch of humour.

### MRS ADIS

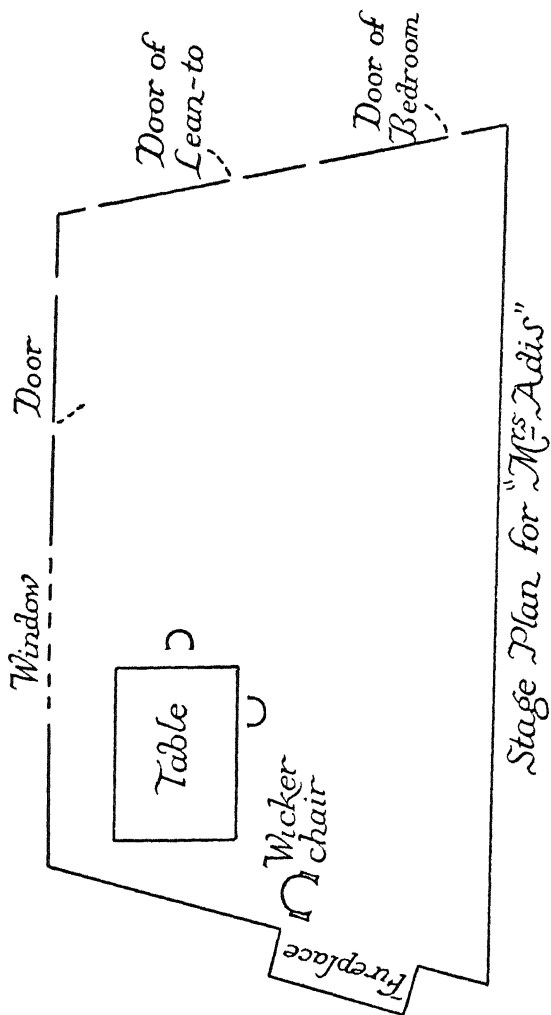
No performance of this play may be given unless written permission is first obtained from the authors' agent, Mr. A. D. Peters, 10 Buckingham Street, London, W.C.2. The fee for each performance by amateurs is one guinea, payable in advance.

The play takes about fifteen minutes in performance.

*Mrs Adis* is comparatively easy to act because of its simplicity and poignancy. It demands from the actors simplicity, sincerity, and a full understanding of their parts. The characters of Mrs. Adis and Peter Crouch must be studied carefully from dialogue and stage-directions. They are both stunned and broken by the tragedy. From the moment when she realizes that Tom is dead, Mrs. Adis moves like a woman in a dream. At the beginning of the play she must be shrewd and critical rather than harsh. Peter Crouch, harassed, desperate, apologetic, and finally broken-hearted, offers a good acting part. The gamekeepers need be only sympathetic, awed, and uneasy. Tom Adis should be a man, not a dummy. If Sussex speech is natural to the actors, so much the better, but the play can be translated into any provincial dialect, or given without any definite dialect at all, provided that speech is rather slow and does not suggest urban culture or vulgarity. Dresses can be modern, but must appear worn and poor and "countrified."

Movements and grouping are described in fairly complete detail in the stage-directions, which should be read with the stage-plan.

The setting can be considerably simplified if necessary, and as an extreme measure the play could be given in a



plain curtain-set, the fireplace and window being eliminated and the doors being suggested by the sound of locks and bolts off stage. Mrs. Adis could then busy herself at the table instead of the fireplace. If curtains are used, alone or in combination with fireplace and practical windows and doors, they should be of some coarse material such as hessian, as in *The House with the Twisty Windows*. The hangings of dark serge or velvet which would do excellently for *Colombine*, for instance, or *The New Wing at Elsinore*, would be too rich in effect for this play. A realistic setting would be a distinct advantage for this play, however, as for *The House with the Twisty Windows*, and could be built up without any serious difficulty from the flats already recommended. Care must be taken to give thickness to doors which open inwards, or they will look absurd, and the whole structure must be solid enough not to tremble ludicrously whenever a door is opened. For the lean-to door a real lock may be used, and it must be noisy, to make the audience realize that the door has been locked. To prepare for the terrible significance which it assumes later, by drawing attention to it from the first, the key must be large and heavy (common enough in the country) and hung in full view on a nail beside the lean-to door, about five feet from the floor. The footsteps heard outside the door must not sound hollowly on wood: a strip of felt or coco-nut matting will help.

Lighting presents no difficulties. It must be bright enough to make the actors' features plainly visible from the back of the hall, but it should not be brilliant. If it can be toned to the softness of lamplight, it will be of considerable help in creating atmosphere.

One final warning may perhaps be permitted. In tragedy, even more than in other types of play, it is essential that the actors should be word-perfect, or the voice of the prompter may break the spell and ruin the play.

### TICKLESS TIME

No performance of this play may be given unless permission has first been obtained from the author's agents, Messrs. Curtis Brown, Ltd., 13 King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2. The fee for every amateur performance is one guinea.

The play takes about thirty-five minutes in performance.

The happiest setting for *Tickless Time* is a garden, with a house where it is required. Then a square of turf can be removed with care, to provide the cemetery for clocks, and replaced after the play.

If the performance is to be given on an indoor stage, however, the cemetery can be arranged by constructing for the pedestal of the sundial a square base large enough to conceal all the clocks when they are "buried." A few bucketfuls of earth will enable Ian to make play with the spade

In either case the "smothered sound of the alarm going off underground" should be supplied by a buried electric bell.

An indoor performance can be very well given on a curtained stage, and Eloise can speak from behind the scenes instead of "poking her head out of the second-story window."

Sophisticated comedy such as this is more difficult, because it requires more finished acting, than, say, *Elizabeth Refuses*. Miss Macnamara's comedy is based on broad human effects and oddities of character which have universal appeal; Miss Glaspell's is self-conscious, posed, intellectual, a kind of comedy of manners—and may be caviare to some audiences. But there are many good farcical touches in it which are sure to be well received, and there should be little difficulty in casting any of the parts except Ian and Eloise. These two players must be able to appreciate and portray the simple-mindedness which marks them both, as well as Ian's muddled rhapsodic idealism and his wife's muddled attempts to follow him. Actors and producer will probably find it helpful to read *Inheritors* and *Bernice*, for in *Tickless Time* Miss Glaspell seems to be deliberately making fun of her own serious work.

$$X=0$$

The fee for each and every representation of this play by amateurs is one guinea, payable in advance to Messrs. Samuel French, Ltd., 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, or their authorized representatives, who,

upon payment of the fee, will issue a licence for the performance to take place. No public performance may be given unless this licence has first been obtained.

The play takes about thirty minutes in performance.

The simplicity and the poignant tragic beauty of this play have already commended it to many dramatic societies, and no doubt many more will attempt it with pleasure to their audiences and themselves. It is one of the very few one-act tragedies in blank verse which are effective stage-plays, and except for the difficulty of speaking blank verse—an art in itself—it is comparatively simple to act and needs little comment. The actors must not be afraid to remain still.

The stage-setting can be simple too, alarming as it seems at first sight, if this solution of the problem is adopted. The rear part of the stage is the Trojan wall, the front part the Greek tent. The stage is hung round with black or dark blue curtains. The rampart on which Capys and Ilus walk can be adequately represented by a platform running across the whole width of the stage, with a low coping down stage (that is, on the side nearer the audience) and on the other side a coping high enough to conceal Ilus when he has climbed over it. Both copings can be made fairly easily of a wooden framework covered with three-ply (or canvas) and distempered to look as much like stone as possible. They must be firm enough not to quiver visibly when touched, and should be simple. The platform need not be more than eighteen inches high and three or four feet wide, and should be built in standardized units, for easy removal, which can be used again and again in other plays.

The "Trojan wall" can remain unchanged throughout the play, being hidden during Scenes i. and iii. by the curtains which form the Greek tent. These can be made of hessian, hung to be drawn across the stage, either parallel with the line of the footlights or, better still, to meet at an angle. They should be caught together about eight feet from the ground, so that the triangular opening suggests a tent, and if this leaves part of the Trojan wall visible from the auditorium, another dark curtain must be hung as far behind the opening as possible. The tent can be furnished with two beds, each made of three forms lashed together and covered with fur rugs. If a stage torch is not used, it can be replaced by a piece of candle



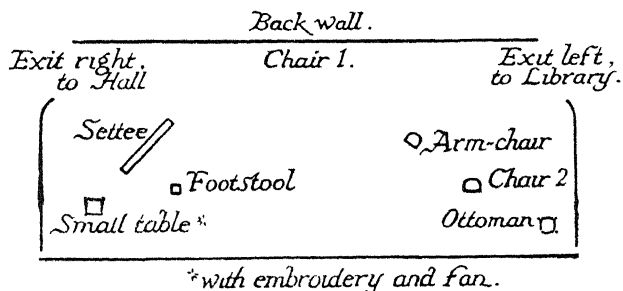
hidden in a Greek lamp on a metal stand : any good library will yield a book with a picture which can be copied.

The lighting for the Trojan scene needs a sheet of gelatine to make starlight, and should be as low as possible ; for the Greek scene it may be warmer in tone and a little brighter. In both, the features of the actors must be clearly visible from the back of the hall, or the attention of the audience will not be held.

The stage staff must wear rubber-soled shoes and have specified duties assigned to them. The scene-changing should be rehearsed until it can be done quite silently in one minute : this is not difficult, and a longer interval will break the continuity of the play.

### ELIZABETH REFUSES

No public representation of this play may be given unless written permission has first been obtained from



Messrs. Joseph Williams, 29 Enford Street, Marylebone, London, W.1. The fee may vary from five shillings to one guinea, according to the circumstances. Special facilities are given for public performances by Girls' Clubs and Women's Institutes.

The play takes about twenty-five minutes in performance.

"The essentials of the scene," writes Miss Macnamara, "are an exit to the library and another to the hall ; both are up-stage, and can be adequately represented by gaps

between screens on either side and the back wall " The dark panelling which surrounds the stage in some halls would make an excellent background, and if there are no suitable exits a dark screen on either side will provide the necessary cover for the characters when they are off stage. If there is no panelling, a surround of dark curtains would be admirable. In fact, the costumes of this period never look better than against black velvet.

A front curtain is not needed. The author suggests that, if there is none, at the end of the play Jane should not enter, but Elizabeth should go out, calling Jane.

Miss Macnamara's careful stage-directions reveal her experience of the needs of amateur players, and when read with her stage-plan they provide very helpful instructions for rehearsing the play.

### BROTHER WOLF

Applications regarding the amateur acting rights of this (and the other *Little Plays of St. Francis*) should be made to the Secretary, The Incorporated Society of Authors, 84 Drayton Gardens, London, S.W.10, and no performance may be given unless permission has first been obtained. The fee for *Brother Wolf* is one guinea. Rutland Boughton's incidental music for the plays is published by Stainer and Bell.

The play takes about twenty-five minutes in performance.

The amateur producer of *Brother Wolf* should begin work by getting a copy of *The "Little Plays" Handbook*, by Laurence Housman (Sidgwick and Jackson, 5s.). Having himself produced the *Little Plays of St. Francis*, and having seen several amateur performances of them, the author has written this book for the benefit of amateurs. It includes a stage-design and notes on the setting, a general introduction which contains much sound advice to the actor, and an acting commentary on each of the *Little Plays* and their sequels—*Followers of St. Francis* and *The Comments of Juniper*.

Very few amateurs could give *Brother Wolf* a realistic setting, but this is by no means essential. A curtained stage will do, with a few informal shrubs if possible and a small platform, concealed behind them, for Bartol. It

would certainly be an advantage if the background were left in shadow, as Mr. Housman suggests, and the light directed only on the acting area. "Assisi" should be in the auditorium, so that Francis and Lupo face the audience when looking down at the city.

The land-slide is the chief problem. One method of solving it is to imitate the noise as well as possible off stage, by shaking a strip of sheet iron (as for thunder) and tearing coarse calico. With experiment this can be made fairly satisfactory, and if accompanied by a sudden brief dimming of light (not to complete darkness) it will be sufficiently suggestive.

*Brother Wolf* will fully repay careful production, for it can be very effective on the stage. The touches of humour relieve the play without destroying the atmosphere—but there must be no unintentional humour! Especially dramatic are the wolf-howls of the robbers as Lupo excites them to fury, their closing in upon Francis and Juniper from behind, and Lupo's motion to stab Francis. The producer will make the most of these without exaggerating them into melodrama, which does not appear except in the character of Lupo. His self-conscious nursing of his hatred makes him akin to Mr. Bernard Shaw's Captain Brassbound. He is a very different person from the simple-minded scoundrels who follow him.

The climax of the play and the decisive testing of the actors comes with the long speech of Francis at the end. "This should be given," says Mr. Housman, "with all the artistry of an actor who makes an imaginary scene live, but very quietly, tenderly, and persuasively. Juniper's face is a devout commentary on the art of Francis: to him, at all events, the scene becomes real; wonderingly he sees the child, the lover, the dying man, and crosses himself.

"Lupo remains stock-still, staring, with a very slowly growing apprehension of the new values which are being presented to him. As Francis recounts the story of the angel, his voice changes: he is telling something from the remote past, that remains eternally true; his voice has awe in it, but as he goes on the human appeal deepens, and the sentence 'thou art a sinner, as I also am a sinner,' gives the secret of his method: he and the robber are fellows, not separates."

It is very evident that Francis and Juniper must be cast with great care, and are excellent parts. Juniper, the fool who became a saint, is perhaps more interesting than his friend and leader, for his character lends itself to more than one interpretation. He is an admirable foil to Francis.

As for Francis himself, it is all-important to remember that he does not preach or denounce; that it is love and not righteous indignation which moves him; and that his passionate faith is matched always by his unshaken serenity and his lively sense of humour.

### *SOME BOOKS FOR THE AMATEUR*

*"Let's do a Play!"* Rodney Bennett. Illustrated by Hugh Chesterman. Large crown 8vo, cloth gilt. Nelson.

Plays, concerts, charades, revues, living marionettes, mock conjuring, and all kinds of amateur entertainments are dealt with in this book, from the simplest "show" got up on the spur of the moment, to the full-dress production in a public hall. Mr. Bennett proves himself an expert on rehearsal, stage-management, lighting, make-up, scenery, etc., etc., and his wide experience of amateur work enables him to explain exactly how to make the best of limited funds and equipment and difficult conditions. His book is unique, because it is as useful to boys and girls "running a show on their own" as to their elders when these decide to take charge.

Ample material for a number of programmes is given in the last 140 pages, which contain a very varied selection of plays, sketches, and poems by well-known modern writers.

*The Small Stage and Its Equipment.* R. Angus Wilson. With an Introduction by Sir Barry Jackson. Allen and Unwin.

This deals with all the problems of temporary and permanent stage-construction, lighting, and scenery, and is invaluable to the amateur because it offers practicable solutions.

*Stage Lighting.* C. Harold Ridge. Heffer.

An invaluable treatise on the art and technique of the subject, which every dramatic society should possess.

*British Costume during Nineteen Centuries.* Mrs. Charles A. Ashdown. T. C. and E. C. Jack.

The best single-volume history : from the time of the Britons to 1820, with a special section on ecclesiastical dress. 578 illustrations in colour and line.

*A Book of Make-up.* Eric Ward. French.

A practical handbook with diagrams.

*A List of Plays for Boys and Men and A List of Plays for Girls and Women.* Compiled by the British Drama League. Nelson.

Over 200 classified plays are given in each list, with full details of characters, settings, costumes, publisher, price, fee (if any), agent, and a summary of the plot. Fully indexed.

*Mimes and Miming.* Isabel Chisman and Gladys Wiles. Nelson.

A book for beginners, as well as for those who have already discovered the delights of miming ; it explains *exactly* what to do. Fourteen mimes without acting fees are included.

*On the Art of the Theatre.* Edward Gordon Craig. Heinemann.

This great theatre artist's books are full of original and inspiring ideas for the interpretation of drama. Illustrations of dresses and settings.

## PERFORMANCES OUTSIDE THE BRITISH ISLES

Permission to perform the plays in this book outside the British Isles must be obtained in advance from the following addresses :

For *Thirty Minutes in a Street*, *The House with the Twisted Windows*, *Colombine*, *Moonshine*, *Mrs. Adis*, and *X = 0* from the representatives of Messrs. Samuel French, Ltd., listed below.

For *Tickleless Time*, in Australia, Canada, and the U.S.A., from Messrs. Curtis Brown, Ltd., 18 East 48th Street, New York, and in other English-speaking countries from the representatives of Messrs. Samuel French, Ltd., listed below.

For *Brother Wolf*, in South Africa from Messrs. Wertheim, Becker, and Leveson, Corporation Buildings, Cor. Commissioner and Rissik Streets, Johannesburg; in the U.S.A. and Canada from the Baker International Book Bureau, 569 Boylston Street, Boston 16, Mass. (not exclusive), and Messrs. Samuel French, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York; and in New Zealand from Miss Elizabeth Blake, 18 Schwyn Terrace, Wellington.

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In India : Messrs. Thacker & Co., Ltd., Booksellers, Bombay; or Messrs. Higginbothams, Mount Road, Madras. In Burma : Messrs. Misquith, Ltd., 279 Dalhousie Street, Rangoon.

In Australia : Miss Mary F. Miller, P.O. Box 707 F., Melbourne; or Will Andrade, Esq., 173 Pitt Street, Sydney. In New Zealand : Mrs. Bert Royle, Box 395, Wellington.

## APPENDIX

### STORIES FOR DRAMATIZATION

#### I—THE ENGLISHMAN

From *The Path of the King*, by JOHN BUCHAN

THE little hut among the oak trees was dim in the October twilight on the evening of St Callixtus' Day. It had been used by swineherds, for the earthen floor was puddled by the feet of generations of hogs, and in the corner lay piles of rotting acorns. Outside the mist had filled the forest, and the ways were muffled with fallen leaves, so that the four men who approached the place came as stealthily as shades.

They reconnoitred a moment at the entrance, for it was a country of war.

"Quarters for the night," said one, and put his shoulder to the door of oak toppings hinged on strips of cowhide.

But he had not taken a step inside before he hastily withdrew.

"There is something there," he cried—"something that breathes. A light, Gil "

One of the four lit a lantern from his flint and poked it within. It revealed the foul floor and the rotting acorns, and in the far corner, on a bed of withered boughs, something dark which might be a man. They stood still and listened. There was the sound of painful breathing, and then the gasp with which a sick man

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wakens. A figure disengaged itself from the shadows. Seeing it was but one man, the four pushed inside, and the last pulled the door to behind him.

"What have we here?" the leader cried. A man had dragged himself to his feet, a short, square fellow, who held himself erect with a grip on a side-post. His eyes were vacant, dazzled by the light and also by pain. He seemed to have had hard usage that day, for his shaggy locks were matted with blood from a sword-cut above his forehead, one arm hung limp, and his tunic was torn and gashed. He had no weapons but a knife, which he held blade upwards in the hollow of his big hand.

The four who confronted him were as ill-looking a quartet as Duke William's motley host could show. One, the leader, was an unfrocked priest of Rouen; one was a hedge-robber from the western marches who had followed Alan of Brittany; a third had the olive cheeks and the long nose of the south; and the fourth was a heavy German from beyond the Rhine. They were the kites that batten on the offal of war, and, the great battle on the seashore having been won by better men, were creeping into the conquered land for the first fruits of its plunder.

"An English porker," cried the leader. "We will have the tusks off him." Indeed, in the wild light the wounded man, with his flat face and forked beard, had the look of a boar cornered by hounds.

"Ware his teeth," said the one they called Gil. "He has a knife in his trotter."

The evil faces of the four were growing merry. They were worthless soldiers, but adepts in murder. Loot was their first thought, but after that furtive slaying. There seemed nothing to rob here, but there was weak flesh to make sport of.

Gil warily crept on one side, where he held his spear ready. The ex-priest, who had picked up somewhere a round English buckler, gave the orders. "I will run in on him and take his stroke, so you be ready to close. There is nothing to be feared from the swine. See, he is blooded and fainted."

The lantern had been set on the ground by the door and revealed only the lower limbs of the four. Their heads were murky in shadow. Their speech was foreign



to the wounded man, but he saw their purpose. He was clearly foredone with pain, but his vacant eyes kindled to slow anger, and he shook back his hair so that the bleeding broke out again on his forehead. He was as silent as an old tusker at bay.

The ex-priest gave the word, and the four closed in on him. He defeated their plan by hurling himself on the leader's shield, so that his weight bore him backwards and he could not use his weapon. The spears on the flanks failed for the same reason, and the two men posted there had well-nigh been the death of each other. The fourth, the one from the south, whose business it had been to support the priest, tripped, and fell sprawling beside the lantern.

The Englishman had one arm round the priest's neck and was squeezing the breath out of him. But the blood of the four was kindling, and they had vengeance instead of sport to seek. Mouthing curses, the three of them went to the rescue of the leader, and a weaponless and sore-wounded man cannot strive with such odds. They overpowered him, bending his arms viciously back and kicking his broken head. Their oaths filled the hut with an ugly clamour, but no sound came from their victim.

Suddenly a gust of air set the lantern flickering, and a newcomer stood in the doorway. He picked up the light and looked down on the struggle. He was a tall, very lean man, smooth-faced and black-haired, helmetless and shieldless, but wearing the plated hauberk of the soldier. There was no scabbard on his left side, but his right hand held a long bright sword.

For a second he lifted the light high, while he took in the scene. His eyes were dark and dancing, like the ripples on a peat stream. "So-ho!" he said softly. "Murder! And by our own vermin!"

He appeared to brood for a second, and then he acted. For he set the light very carefully in the crook of a joist so that it illumined the whole hut. Then he reached out a hand, plucked the ex-priest from his quarry, and swinging him in both arms, tossed him through the door into the darkness. It would seem that he fell hard, for there was a groan and then silence.

"One less," he said softly.

The three had turned to face him, warned by Gil's

exclamation, and found themselves looking at the ominous bar of light which was his sword. Cornered like rats, they took small comfort from the odds. They were ready to surrender, still readier to run, and they stood on their defence with no fight in their faces, whining in their several patois. All but the man from the south. He was creeping round in the darkness by the walls, and had in his hand a knife. No mailed hauberk protected the interloper's back, and there was a space there for steel to quiver between his shoulder-blades.

The newcomer did not see, but the eyes of the wounded man seemed to have been cleared by the scuffle. He was now free, and from the floor he snatched the round shield which the ex-priest had carried, and hurled it straight at the creeping miscreant. It was a heavy oaken thing with rim and boss of iron, and it caught him fairly above the ear, so that he dropped like a poled ox. The stranger turned his head to see what was happening. "A lucky shot, friend," he cried. "I thank you." And he addressed himself to the two pitiful bandits who remained.

But their eyes were looking beyond him to the door, and their jaws had dropped in terror. For from outside came the sound of horses' hooves and bridles, and two riders had dismounted and were peering into the hut. The first was a very mountain of a man, whose conical helmet surmounted a vast pale face, on which blond moustaches hung like the teeth of a walrus. The said helmet was grievously battered, and the nose-piece was awry as if from some fierce blow, but there was no scar on the skin. His long hauberk was wrought in scales of steel and silver, and the fillets which bound his great legs were of fine red leather. Behind him came a grizzled squire, bearing a kite-shaped shield painted with the cognizance of a dove.

"What have we here?" said the knight, in a reedy voice like a boy's. His pale eyes contemplated the figures—the wounded man, now faint again with pain and half fallen on the litter of branches; his deliverer, tall and grim, but with laughing face; the two murderers cringing in their fear; in a corner the huddled body of the man from the south half hidden by the shield. "Speak, fellow," and he addressed the soldier. "What work has been toward? Have you not had your bellyful

of battles that you must scabble like rats in this hovel ? What are you called, and whence come you ? ”

The soldier lifted his brow, looked his questioner full in the face, and, as if liking what he found there, bowed his head in respect. The huge man had the air of one to be obeyed.

“ I am of the Duke’s army,” he said, “ and was sent on to reconnoitre the forest roads. I stumbled on this hut, and found four men about to slay a wounded English. One lies outside where I flung him, another is there with a cracked skull, and you have before you the remnant.”

The knight seemed to consider. “ And why should a soldier of the Duke’s be so careful of English lives ? ” he asked.

“ I would help my lord Duke to conquer this land,” was the answer. “ We have broken their army and the way is straight before us. We shall have to fight other armies, but we cannot be fighting all our days, and we do not conquer England till England accepts us. I have heard enough of that stubborn people to know that the way to win them is not by murder. A fair fight, and then honest dealing and mercy, say I.”

The knight laughed. “ A Solomon in judgment,” he cried. “ But who are you that bear a sword and wear gold on your finger ? ”

The old squire broke in. “ My lord Count, I know the man. He is a hunter of the Lord Odo’s, and has a name for valour. He wrought mightily this morning in the hill. They call him Jehan the Hunter, and sometimes Jehan the Outborn, for no man knows his comings. There is a rumour that he is of high blood, and truly in battle he bears himself like a prince. The monks loved him not, but the Lord Odo favoured him.”

The knight looked steadily for the space of a moment at the tall soldier, and his light eyes seemed to read deep. “ Are you that man ? ” he asked at last, and got the reply : “ I am Jehan the Hunter.”

“ Bid my fellows attend to yon scum,” he told his squire. “ The camp marshal will have fruit for his gallows. The sweepings of all Europe have drifted with us to England, and it is our business to make bonfire of them before they breed a plague. . . . See to the wounded man, likewise. He may be one of the stout house-

carles who fought with Harold at Stamford, and to meet us raced like a gale through the length of England. By the Mount of the Archangel, I would fain win such mettle to our cause."

Presently the hut was empty save for the two soldiers, who faced each other while the lantern flickered to its end on the rafters.

"The good Odo is dead," said the knight. "An arrow in the left eye has bereft our Duke of a noble ally and increased the blessedness of the City of Paradise. You are masterless now. Will you ride with me on my service, you Jehan the Hunter? It would appear that we are alike in our ways of thinking. They call me the Dove from the shield I bear, and a dove I seek to be in the winning of England. The hawk's task is over when the battle is won, and he who has but the sword for weapon is no hawk, but carrion-crow. We have to set our Duke on the throne, but that is but the first step. There are more battles before us, and when they are ended begins the slow task of the conquest of English hearts. How say you, Jehan? Will you ride north with me on this errand, and out of the lands which are granted me to govern have a corner on which to practise your creed?"

So it befell that Jehan the Hunter, sometimes called Jehan the Outborn, joined the company of Ivo of Dives, and followed him when Duke William swept northward laughing his gross jolly laughter and swearing terribly by the splendour of God.

#### A NOTE ON DRAMATIZATION

This story is only one section taken from Chapter II. of *The Path of the King*, but it is sufficiently complete in itself to make a good one-act play.

There are two ways of treating it. To make the fighting all-important is the wrong one, for the action is too brief and simple for effective melodrama, and the play will be little more than a *mêlée*. The right method is to take as the theme of the play the speech of Jehan's which begins: "I would help my lord Duke to conquer this land" (see page 255). In other words, the play should help to make it plain how the Normans held England,

after they had conquered it, and if this is done the play will gain much in strength and interest without losing any of the excitement provided by the fighting. It would make this and other points clearer if the whole of Chapter II. of *The Path of the King* were read to the class before they began work.

The scene of the play must be the inside of the hut from the beginning. The first thing to decide is whether the wounded Saxon shall be there before the four Norman plunderers arrive, or not. The next problem is how to make clear to the audience, in an interesting and natural way, the time, place, and circumstances, and the character of the plunderers.

It may be found advisable to make considerable alterations and additions. William himself might appear on the scene if his appearance were made plausible. This and other questions should be freely discussed, and scenarios, or outlines, should be drawn up, before the writing of the play is begun.

## II.—DOTHEBOYS HALL

From *Nicholas Nickleby*, by CHARLES DICKENS

### I. INTRODUCING MR. SQUEERS, THE YORKSHIRE SCHOOLMASTER

Mr. Squeers's appearance was not prepossessing. He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favour of two. The eye he had was unquestionably useful, but decidedly not ornamental: being of a greenish-grey, and in shape resembling the fanlight of a street door. The blank side of his face was much wrinkled and puckered up, which gave him a very sinister appearance, especially when he smiled, at which times his expression bordered closely on the villainous. His hair was very flat and shiny save at the ends, where it was brushed stiffly up from a low protruding forehead, which assorted well with his harsh voice and coarse manner. He was about

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two or three-and-fifty, and a trifle below the middle size ; he wore a white neckerchief with long ends, and a suit of scholastic black ; but his coat sleeves being a great deal too long, and his trousers a great deal too short, he appeared ill at ease in his clothes, and as if he were in a perpetual state of astonishment at finding himself so respectable.

[Nicholas Nickleby is about nineteen, strong, good-looking, and good-natured.]

## II. NICHOLAS ARRIVES AT DOTHEBOYS HALL

Mr. Squeers, having bolted the door to keep it shut, ushered Nicholas into a small parlour scantily furnished with a few chairs, a yellow map hung against the wall, and a couple of tables : one of which bore some preparations for supper ; while, on the other, a tutor's assistant, a Murray's grammar, half a dozen cards of terms, and a worn letter directed to Wackford Squeers, Esquire, were arranged in picturesque confusion.

They had not been in this apartment a couple of minutes when a female bounced into the room, and, seizing Mr. Squeers by the throat, gave him two loud kisses, one close after the other, like a postman's knock. The lady, who was of a large, raw-boned figure, was about half a head taller than Mr. Squeers, and was dressed in a dimity night-jacket, with her hair in papers ; she had also a dirty nightcap on, relieved by a yellow cotton handkerchief which tied it under the chin.

"How is my Squeery ?" said this lady, in a playful manner, and a very hoarse voice.

"Quite well, my love," replied Squeers. "How are the cows ?"

"All right, every one of 'em," answered the lady.

"And the pigs ?" said Squeers.

"As well as they were when you went away."

"Come ; that's a blessing," said Squeers, pulling off his greatcoat. "The boys are all as they were, I suppose ?"

"Oh yes, they're well enough," replied Mrs. Squeers snappishly. "That young Pitcher's had a fever"

"No !" exclaimed Squeers. "Damn that boy, he's always at something of that sort."

"Never was such a boy, I do believe," said Mrs.

Squeers ; " whatever he has is always catching, too. I say it's obstinacy, and nothing shall ever convince me that it isn't. I'd beat it out of him ; and I told you that six months ago."

" So you did, my love," rejoined Squeers. " We'll try what can be done "

Pending these little endearments, Nicholas had stood awkwardly enough in the middle of the room, not very well knowing whether he was expected to retire into the passage, or to remain where he was. He was now relieved from his perplexity by Mr. Squeers.

" This is the new young man, my dear," said that gentleman.

" Oh," replied Mrs. Squeers, nodding her head at Nicholas, and eyeing him coldly from top to toe.

" He'll take a meal with us to-night," said Squeers, " and go among the boys to-morrow morning. You can give him a shakedown here, to-night, can't you ? "

" We must manage it somehow," replied the lady, " You don't much mind how you sleep, I suppose, sir ? "

" No, indeed," replied Nicholas ; " I am not particular "

" That's lucky," said Mrs. Squeers. And as the lady's humour was considered to lie chiefly in retort, Mr. Squeers laughed heartily, and seemed to expect that Nicholas should do the same.

After some further conversation between the master and mistress relative to the success of Mr. Squeers's trip, and the people who had paid, and the people who had made default in payment, a young servant girl brought in a Yorkshire pie and some cold beef, which being set upon the table, the boy Smike appeared with a jug of ale.

Mr. Squeers was emptying his greatcoat pockets of letters to different boys, and other small documents, which he had brought down in them. The boy glanced with an anxious and timid expression at the papers, as if with a sickly hope that one among them might relate to him. The look was a very painful one, and went to Nicholas's heart at once ; for it told a long and very sad history.

It induced him to consider the boy more attentively, and he was surprised to observe the extraordinary mixture of garments which formed his dress. Although he

could not have been less than eighteen or nineteen years old, and was tall for that age, he wore a skeleton suit, such as is usually put upon very little boys, and which, though most absurdly short in the arms and legs, was quite wide enough for his attenuated frame. In order that the lower part of his legs might be in perfect keeping with this singular dress, he had a very large pair of boots, originally made for tops, which might have been once worn by some stout farmer, but were now too patched and tattered for a beggar. God knows how long he had been there, but he still wore the same linen which he had first taken down; for, round his neck, was a tattered child's frill, only half concealed by a coarse, man's neckerchief. He was lame; and, as he feigned to be busy in arranging the table, glanced at the letters with a look so keen, and yet so dispirited and hopeless, that Nicholas could hardly bear to watch him.

"What are you bothering about there, Smike?" cried Mrs. Squeers; "let the things alone, can't you?"

"Eh!" said Squeers, looking up. "Oh! it's you, is it?"

"Yes, sir," replied the youth, pressing his hands together, as though to control, by force, the nervous wandering of his fingers; "is there——"

"Well!" said Squeers

"Have you—— Did anybody—— Has nothing been heard——about me?"

"Devil a bit," replied Squeers testily.

The lad withdrew his eyes, and, putting his hand to his face, moved towards the door.

"Not a word," resumed Squeers, "and never will be. Now, this is a pretty sort of thing, isn't it, that you should have been left here all these years and no money paid after the first six—nor no notice taken, nor no clue to be got who you belong to? It's a pretty sort of thing that I should have to feed a great fellow like you, and never hope to get one penny for it, isn't it?"

The boy put his hand to his head as if he were making an effort to recollect something, and then, looking vacantly at his questioner, gradually broke into a smile, and limped away.

"I'll tell you what, Squeers," remarked his wife, as the door closed, "I think that young chap's turning silly."



"I hope not," said the schoolmaster; "for he's a handy fellow out of doors, and worth his meat and drink, anyway. I should think he'd have wit enough for us, though, if he was. But come; let's have supper, for I'm hungry and tired, and want to go to bed."

This reminder brought in an exclusive steak for Mr. Squeers, who speedily proceeded to do it ample justice. Nicholas drew up his chair, but his appetite was effectually taken away.

"How's the steak, Squeers?" said Mrs. S.

"Tender as a lamb," replied Squeers. "Have a bit?"

"I couldn't eat a morsel," replied his wife. "What'll the young man take, my dear?"

"Whatever he likes that's present," rejoined Squeers, in a most unusual burst of generosity.

"What do you say, Mr. Knuckleboy?" inquired Mrs. Squeers.

"I'll take a little of the pie, if you please," replied Nicholas. "A very little, for I'm not hungry."

"Well, it's a pity to cut the pie if you're not hungry, isn't it?" said Mrs. Squeers. "Will you try a bit of the beef?"

"Whatever you please," replied Nicholas abstractedly; "it's all the same to me."

Mrs. Squeers looked vastly gracious on receiving this reply; and nodding to Squeers, as much as to say that she was glad to find the young man knew his station, assisted Nicholas to a slice of meat with her own fair hands.

"Ale, Squeery?" inquired the lady, winking and frowning to give him to understand that the question propounded was, whether Nicholas should have ale, and whether he (Squeers) would take any.

"Certainly," said Squeers, re-telegraphing in the same manner. "A glassful."

So Nicholas had a glassful, and, being occupied with his own reflections, drank it in happy innocence of all the foregoing proceedings.

"Uncommon juicy steak that," said Squeers, as he laid down his knife and fork, after plying it in silence for some time.

"It's prime meat," rejoined his lady. "I bought a good large piece of it myself on purpose for——"

"For what?" exclaimed Squeers hastily. "Not for the——"

"No, no; not for them," rejoined Mrs. Squeers; "on purpose for you against you came home. Lor! you didn't think I could have made such a mistake as that"

"Upon my word, my dear, I didn't know what you were going to say," said Squeers, who had turned pale

"You needn't make yourself uncomfortable," remarked his wife, laughing heartily. "To think that I should be such a noddy! Well!"

This part of the conversation was rather unintelligible; but popular rumour in the neighbourhood asserted that Mr. Squeers, being amiably opposed to cruelty to animals, not unfrequently purchased for boy consumption the bodies of horned cattle who had died a natural death. Possibly he was apprehensive of having unintentionally devoured some choice morsel intended for the young gentlemen.

Supper being over, and removed by a small servant girl with a hungry eye, Mrs. Squeers retired to lock it up, and also to take into safe custody the clothes of the five boys who had just arrived, and who were half-way up the troublesome flight of steps which leads to death's door, in consequence of exposure to the cold. They were then regaled with a light supper of porridge, and stowed away side by side in a small bedstead, to warm each other, and dream of a substantial meal, with something hot after it, if their fancies set that way, which it is not at all improbable they did.

Mr. Squeers treated himself to a stiff tumbler of brandy-and-water, made on the liberal half-and-half principle, allowing for the dissolution of the sugar; and his amiable helpmate mixed Nicholas the ghost of a small glassful of the same compound. This done, Mr. and Mrs. Squeers drew close up to the fire, and, sitting with their feet on the fender, talked confidentially in whispers; while Nicholas, taking up the tutor's assistant, read the interesting legends in the miscellaneous questions, and all the figures into the bargain, with as much thought or consciousness of what he was doing as if he had been in a magnetic slumber.

At length Mr. Squeers yawned fearfully, and opined

that it was high time to go to bed ; upon which signal, Mrs. Squeers and the girl dragged in a small straw mattress and a couple of blankets, and arranged them into a couch for Nicholas

" We'll put you into your regular bedroom to-morrow, Nickleby," said Squeers. " Let me see ! Who sleeps in Brooks's bed, my dear ! "

" In Brooks's ? " said Mrs. Squeers, pondering. " There's Jennings, little Bolder, Graymarsh, and what's-his-name "

" So there is," rejoined Squeers. " Yes ! Brooks is full. "

" Full ! " thought Nicholas, " I should think he was. "

" There's a place somewhere, I know," said Squeers ; " but I can't at this moment call to mind where it is. However, we'll have all that settled to-morrow. Good-night, Nickleby. Seven o'clock in the morning, mind "

" I shall be ready, sir," replied Nicholas. " Good-night. "

" I'll come in myself and show you where the well is," said Squeers. " You'll always find a little bit of soap in the kitchen window ; that belongs to you "

Nicholas opened his eyes, but not his mouth ; and Squeers was again going away, when he once more turned back.

" I don't know, I am sure," he said, " whose towel to put you on ; but if you'll make shift with something to-morrow morning, Mrs. Squeers will arrange that in the course of the day. My dear, don't forget. "

" I'll take care," replied Mrs. Squeers ; " and mind *you* take care, young man, and get first wash. The teacher ought always to have it ; but they get the better of him if they can. "

Mr. Squeers nudged Mrs. Squeers to bring away the brandy bottle, lest Nicholas should help himself in the night ; and, the lady having seized it with great precipitation, they retired together.

Nicholas, being left alone, took half a dozen turns up and down the room in a condition of much agitation and excitement ; but, growing gradually calmer, sat himself down in a chair, and mentally resolved that, come what might, he would endeavour for a time to bear whatever wretchedness there might be in store for him.

## III. THE INTERNAL ECONOMY OF DOTHEBOYS HALL

A ride of two hundred and odd miles in severe weather is one of the best softeners of a hard bed that ingenuity can devise. Perhaps it is even a sweetener of dreams, for those which hovered over the rough couch of Nicholas, and whispered their airy nothings in his ear, were of an agreeable and happy kind. He was making his fortune very fast indeed, when the faint glimmer of an expiring candle shone before his eyes, and a voice he had no difficulty in recognizing as part and parcel of Mr. Squeers, admonished him that it was time to rise.

"Past seven, Nickleby," said Mr. Squeers.

"Has morning come already?" asked Nicholas, sitting up in bed.

"Ah! that it has," replied Squeers, "and ready iced too. Now, Nickleby, come; tumble up, will you?"

Nicholas needed no further admonition, but "tumbled up" at once, and proceeded to dress himself by the light of the taper which Mr. Squeers carried in his hand.

"Here's a pretty go," said that gentleman; "the pump's froze."

"Indeed!" said Nicholas, not much interested in the intelligence.

"Yes," replied Squeers. "You can't wash yourself this morning."

"Not wash myself!" exclaimed Nicholas.

"No, not a bit of it," rejoined Squeers tartly. "So you must be content with giving yourself a dry polish till we break the ice in the well, and can get a bucketful out for the boys. Don't stand staring at me, but do look sharp, will you?"

Offering no further observation, Nicholas huddled on his clothes. Squeers meanwhile opened the shutters and blew the candle out; when the voice of his amiable consort was heard in the passage, demanding admittance.

"Come in, my love," said Squeers.

Mrs. Squeers came in, still habited in the primitive night-jacket which had displayed the symmetry of her figure on the previous night, and further ornamented with a beaver bonnet of some antiquity, which she wore, with much ease and lightness, on the top of the nightcap before mentioned.

"Drat the things," said the lady, opening the cupboard; "I can't find the school spoon anywhere."

"Never mind it, my dear," observed Squeers, in a soothing manner; "it's of no consequence."

"No consequence; why, how you talk!" retorted Mrs. Squeers sharply; "isn't it brimstone morning?"

"I forgot, my dear," rejoined Squeers; "yes, it certainly is. We purify the boys' blood now and then, Nickleby."

"Purify fiddlesticks' ends," said his lady. "Don't think, young man, that we go to the expense of flower of brimstone and molasses just to purify them; because if you think we carry on the business in that way you'll find yourself mistaken, and so I tell you plainly."

"My dear," said Squeers, frowning. "Hem!"

"Oh! nonsense," rejoined Mrs. Squeers. "If the young man comes to be a teacher here, let him understand at once that we don't want any foolery about the boys. They have the brimstone and treacle, partly because if they hadn't something or other in the way of medicine they'd be always ailing and giving a world of trouble, and partly because it spoils their appetites, and comes cheaper than breakfast and dinner. So, it does them good and us good, at the same time, and that's fair enough, I'm sure."

Having given this explanation, Mrs. Squeers put her head into the closet and instituted a stricter search after the spoon, in which Mr. Squeers assisted. A few words passed between them while they were thus engaged, but as their voices were partially stifled by the cupboard, all that Nicholas could distinguish was that Mr. Squeers said what Mrs. Squeers had said was injudicious, and that Mrs. Squeers said that what Mr. Squeers said was "stuff."

A vast deal of searching and rummaging ensued, and, it proving fruitless, Smike was called in, and pushed by Mrs. Squeers, and boxed by Mr. Squeers, which course of treatment, brightening his intellects, enabled him to suggest that possibly Mrs. Squeers might have the spoon in her pocket, as indeed turned out to be the case. As Mrs. Squeers had previously protested, however, that she was quite certain she had not got it, Smike received another box on the ear for presuming to contradict his mistress, together with a promise of a sound thrashing if

he were not more respectful in future , so that he took nothing very advantageous by his motion.

#### IV THE SCHOOLROOM

It was such a crowded scene, and there were so many objects to attract attention, that, at first, Nicholas stared about him, really without seeing anything at all. By degrees, however, the place resolved itself into a bare and dirty room, with a couple of windows, whereof a tenth part might be of glass, the remainder being stopped up with old copybooks and paper. There were a couple of long, old, rickety desks, cut and notched, and inked, and damaged, in every possible way ; two or three forms ; a detached desk for Squeers ; and another for his assistant. The ceiling was supported, like that of a barn, by cross-beams and rafters ; and the walls were so stained and discoloured, that it was impossible to tell whether they had ever been touched with paint or whitewash.

But the pupils—the young noblemen ! How the last faint traces of hope, the remotest glimmering of any good to be derived from his efforts in this den, faded from the mind of Nicholas as he looked in dismay around ! Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony fingers, children with the countenances of old men, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies, all crowded on the view together ; there were the bleared eye, the hare lip, the crooked foot, and every ugliness or distortion that told of unnatural aversion conceived by parents for their offspring, or of young lives which, from the earliest dawn of infancy, had been one horrible endurance of cruelty and neglect. There were little faces which should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen, dogged suffering ; there was childhood with the light of its eye quenched, its beauty gone, and its helplessness alone remaining ; there were vicious-faced boys, brooding, with leaden eyes, like male-factors in a jail ; and there were young creatures on whom the sins of their frail parents had descended, weeping even for the mercenary nurses they had known, and lonesome even in their loneliness.

And yet this scene, painful as it was, had its grotesque features, which, in a less interested observer than Nicholas,

might have provoked a smile Mrs. Squeers stood at one of the desks, presiding over an immense basin of brimstone and treacle, of which delicious compound she administered a large instalment to each boy in succession : using for the purpose a common wooden spoon, which might have been originally manufactured for some gigantic top, and which widened every young gentleman's mouth considerably, they being all obliged, under heavy corporal penalties, to take in the whole of the bowl at a gasp. In another corner, huddled together for companionship, were the little boys who had arrived on the preceding night, three of them in very large leather breeches, and two in old trousers, a something tighter fit than drawers are usually worn , at no great distance from these was seated the juvenile son and heir of Mr Squeers—a striking likeness of his father—kicking, with great vigour, under the hands of Smike, who was fitting upon him a pair of new boots that bore a most suspicious resemblance to those which the least of the two boys had worn on the journey down—as the little boy himself seemed to think, for he was regarding the appropriation with a look of the most rueful amazement.

Besides these, there was a long row of boys waiting, with countenances of no pleasant anticipation, to be treaced ; and another file, who had just escaped from the infliction, making a variety of wry mouths, indicative of anything but satisfaction.

After some half-hour's delay, Mr Squeers appeared, and the boys took their places and their books, of which latter commodity the average was about one to eight learners. A few minutes having elapsed, during which Mr. Squeers looked very profound, as if he had a perfect apprehension of what was inside all the books, and could say every word of their contents by heart if he only chose to take the trouble, that gentleman called up the first class.

Obedient to this summons there ranged themselves in front of the schoolmaster's desk half a dozen scarecrows, out at knees and elbows, one of whom placed a torn and filthy book beneath his learned eye

"This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby," said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. "We'll get up a Latin one, and

hand that over to you. Now, then, where's the first boy ? ”

“ Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window,” said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

“ So he is, to be sure,” rejoined Squeers “ We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby ; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy ? ”

“ Please, sir, he's weeding the garden,” replied a small voice.

“ To be sure,” said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. “ So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby, what do you think of it ? ”

“ It's a very useful one, at any rate,” answered Nicholas significantly.

“ I believe you,” rejoined Squeers, not remarking the emphasis of his usher. “ Third boy, what's a horse ? ”

“ A beast, sir,” replied the boy.

“ So it is,” said Squeers. “ Ain't it, Nickleby ? ”

“ I believe there is no doubt of that, sir,” answered Nicholas.

“ Of course there isn't,” said Squeers “ A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows, or else where's the use of having grammars at all ? ”

“ Where, indeed ! ” said Nicholas abstractedly.

“ As you're perfect in that,” resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, “ go and look after *my* horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing day to-morrow, and they want the coppers filled.”

So saying, he dismissed the first class to their experiments in practical philosophy, and eyed Nicholas with a look, half cunning and half doubtful, as if he were not altogether certain what he might think of him by this time.



"That's the way we do it, Nickleby," he said, after a pause.

Nicholas shrugged his shoulders in a manner that was scarcely perceptible, and said he saw it was.

"And a very good way it is, too," said Squeers. "Now, just take them fourteen little boys and hear them some reading, because, you know, you must begin to be useful, and idling about here won't do."

Mr. Squeers said this as if it had suddenly occurred to him, either that he must not say too much to his assistant, or that his assistant did not say enough to him in praise of the establishment. The children were ranged in a semicircle round the new master, and he was soon listening to their dull, drawling, hesitating recital of these stories of engrossing interest which are to be found in the more antiquated spelling-books.

In this exciting occupation the morning lagged heavily on. At one o'clock, the boys having previously had their appetites thoroughly taken away by stir-about and potatoes, sat down in the kitchen to some hard salt beef, of which Nicholas was graciously permitted to take his portion to his own solitary desk, and to eat it there in peace. After this, there was another hour of crouching in the schoolroom and shivering with cold, and then school began again.

It was Mr. Squeers's custom to call the boys together, and make a sort of report, after every half-yearly visit to the metropolis, regarding the relations and friends he had seen, the news he had heard, the letters he had brought down, the bills which had been paid, the accounts which had been left unpaid, and so forth. This solemn proceeding always took place in the afternoon of the day succeeding his return; perhaps because the boys acquired strength of mind from the suspense of the morning, or possibly because Mr. Squeers himself acquired greater sternness and inflexibility from certain warm potations in which he was wont to indulge after his early dinner.

Be this as it may, the boys were recalled from the house window, garden, stable, and cow-yard, and the school were assembled in full conclave, when Mr. Squeers, with a small bundle of papers in his hand, and Mrs. S., following with a pair of canes, entered the room and proclaimed silence.

"Let any boy speak a word without leave," said Mr Squeers mildly, "and I'll take the skin off his back."

This special proclamation had the desired effect, and a deathlike silence immediately prevailed, in the midst of which Mr. Squeers went on to say—

"Boys, I've been to London, and have returned to my family and you as strong and well as ever."

According to half-yearly custom, the boys gave three feeble cheers at this refreshing intelligence. Such cheers! Signs of extra strength with the chill on.

"I have seen the parents of some boys," continued Squeers, turning over his papers, "and they're so glad to hear how their sons are getting on, that there's no prospect at all of their going away, which of course is a very pleasant thing to reflect upon, for all parties."

Two or three hands went to two or three eyes when Squeers said this, but the greater part of the young gentlemen, having no particular parents to speak of, were wholly uninterested in the thing one way or other.

"I have had disappointments to contend against," said Squeers, looking very grim; "Bolder's father was two pound ten short. Where is Bolder?"

"Here he is, please, sir," rejoined twenty officious voices. Boys are very like men to be sure.

"Come here, Bolder," said Squeers.

An unhealthy-looking boy, with warts all over his hands, stepped from his place to the master's desk, and raised his eyes imploringly to Squeers's face; his own quite white from the rapid beating of his heart.

"Bolder," said Squeers, speaking very slowly, for he was considering, as the saying goes, where to have him. "Bolder, if your father thinks that because—— Why, what's this, sir?"

As Squeers spoke, he caught up the boy's hand by the cuff of his jacket, and surveyed it with an edifying aspect of horror and disgust.

"What do you call this, sir?" demanded the school-master, administering a cut with the cane to expedite a reply.

"I can't help it, indeed, sir," rejoined the boy, crying. "They will come; it's the dirty work, I think, sir—at least I don't know what it is, sir, but it's not my fault."

"Bolder," said Squeers, tucking up his wristbands, and moistening the palm of his right hand to get a good grip of the cane, "you're an incorrigible young scoundrel, and as the last thrashing did you no good, we must see what another will do towards beating it out of you."

With this, and wholly disregarding a piteous cry for mercy, Mr. Squeers fell upon the boy and caned him soundly, not leaving off, indeed, until his arm was tired out.

"There," said Squeers, when he had quite done; "rub as hard as you like, you won't rub that off in a hurry. Oh! you won't hold that noise, won't you? Put him out, Smike."

The drudge knew better, from long experience, than to hesitate about obeying, so he bundled the victim out by a side door, and Mr. Squeers perched himself again on his own stool, supported by Mrs. Squeers, who occupied another at his side.

"Now, let us see," said Squeers. "A letter for Cobbey. Stand up, Cobbey."

Another boy stood up, and eyed the letter very hard, while Squeers made a mental abstract of the same.

"Oh!" said Squeers: "Cobbey's grandmother is dead, and his uncle John has took to drinking, which is all the news his sister sends, except eighteenpence, which will just pay for that broken square of glass. Mrs. Squeers, my dear, will you take the money?"

The worthy lady pocketed the eighteenpence with a most business-like air, and Squeers passed on to the next boy, as coolly as possible.

"Graymarsh," said Squeers, "he's the next. Stand up, Graymarsh."

Another boy stood up, and the schoolmaster looked over the letter as before.

"Graymarsh's maternal aunt," said Squeers, when he had possessed himself of the contents, "is very glad to hear he's so well and happy, and sends her respectful compliments to Mrs. Squeers, and thinks she must be an angel. She likewise thinks Mr. Squeers is too good for this world; but hopes he may long be spared to carry on the business. Would have sent the two pairs of stockings as desired, but is short of money, so forwards a tract instead, and hopes Graymarsh will put his trust in Providence. Hopes, above all, that he will study in

everything to please Mr. and Mrs. Squeers, and look upon them as his only friends ; and that he will love Master Squeers ; and not object to sleeping five in a bed, which no Christian should. Ah ! ” said Squeers, folding it up, “ a delightful letter. Very affecting indeed.”

Squeers then proceeded with the business by calling out “ Mobbs,” whereupon another boy rose, and Graymarsh resumed his seat.

“ Mobbs’s mother-in-law,” said Squeers, “ took to her bed on hearing that he wouldn’t eat fat, and has been very ill ever since. She wishes to know, by an early post, where he expects to go to if he quarrels with his vittles ; and with what feelings he could turn up his nose at the cow’s liver broth, after his good master had asked a blessing on it. This was told her in the London newspapers—not by Mr. Squeers, for he’s too kind and good to set anybody against anybody—and it has vexed her so much, Mobbs can’t think. She is sorry to find he is discontented, which is sinful and horrid, and hopes Mr. Squeers will flog him into a happier state of mind ; with which view she has also stopped his halfpenny a week pocket-money, and given a double-bladed knife with a corkscrew in it to the missionaries, which she had bought on purpose for him.”

“ A sulky state of feeling,” said Squeers, after a terrible pause, during which he had moistened the palm of his right hand again, “ won’t do. Cheerfulness and contentment must be kept up. Mobbs, come to me ! ”

Mobbs moved slowly towards the desk, rubbing his eyes in anticipation of good cause for doing so ; and he soon afterwards retired by the side door, with as good cause as a boy need have.

Mr. Squeers then proceeded to open a miscellaneous collection of letters, some enclosing money, which Mrs. Squeers “ took care of ” ; and others referring to small articles of apparel, as caps and so forth, all of which the same lady stated to be too large, or too small, and calculated for nobody but young Squeers, who would appear, indeed, to have had most accommodating limbs, since everything that came into the school fitted him to a nicety. His head, in particular, must have been singularly elastic, for hats and caps of all dimensions were alike to him.

This business dispatched, a few slovenly lessons were performed, and Squeers retired to his fireside, leaving Nicholas to take care of the boys in the schoolroom.

## V. SMIKE AND NICHOLAS

As Nicholas was absorbed in these meditations, he all at once encountered the upturned face of Smique, who was on his knees before the stove, picking a few stray cinders from the hearth and planting them on the fire. He had paused to steal a look at Nicholas, and when he saw that he was observed, shrank back, as if expecting a blow.

"You need not fear me," said Nicholas kindly. "Are you cold?"

"N-n-o."

"You are shivering."

"I am not cold," replied Smique quickly. "I'm used to it."

There was such an obvious fear of giving offence in his manner, and he was such a timid, broken-spirited creature, that Nicholas could not help exclaiming, "Poor fellow!"

If he had struck the drudge, he would have slunk away without a word. But now he burst into tears.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" he cried, covering his face with his cracked and horny hands. "My heart will break. It will, it will!"

"Hush!" said Nicholas, laying his hand upon his shoulder. "Be a man; you are nearly one by years. God help you."

"By years!" cried Smique. "Oh dear, dear, how many of them! How many of them since I was a little child, younger than any that are here now! Where are they all?"

"Whom do you speak of?" inquired Nicholas, wishing to rouse the poor half-witted creature to reason. "Tell me."

"My friends," he replied, "myself—my—oh! what sufferings mine have been!"

"There is always hope," said Nicholas; he knew not what to say.

"No," rejoined the other. "no; none for me. Pain,

and fear, pain and fear for me, alive or dead. No hope, no hope !”

The bell rang to bed ; and the boy, subsiding at the sound into his usual listless state, crept away as if anxious to avoid notice. It was with a heavy heart that Nicholas soon afterwards—no, not retired ; there was no retirement there—followed—to his dirty and crowded dormitory.

## VI. NICHOLAS INTERVENES

*[Smike is at last goaded to run away from Dotheboys Hall, but he is found and brought back by Mrs. Squeers. He is to be cruelly punished, as a warning to the other boys, in the presence of the whole school.]*

Squeers’s gaze was fastened on the luckless Smike as he inquired, according to custom in such cases, whether he had anything to say for himself.

“ Nothing, I suppose,” said Squeers, with a diabolical grin.

Smike glanced round, and his eyes rested, for an instant, on Nicholas, as if he had expected him to intercede ; but his look was riveted on his desk.

“ Have you anything to say ? ” demanded Squeers again, giving his right arm two or three flourishes to try its power and suppleness. “ Stand a little out of the way, Mrs. Squeers, my dear ; I’ve hardly got room enough.”

“ Spare me, sir,” cried Smike.

“ Oh, that’s all, is it ? ” said Squeers. “ Yes, I’ll flog you within an inch of your life, and spare you that.”

“ Ha, ha, ha,” laughed Mrs. Squeers, “ that’s a good ‘un ! ”

“ I was driven to do it,” said Smike faintly ; and casting another imploring look about him.

“ Driven to do it, were you ? ” said Squeers. “ Oh ! it wasn’t your fault ; it was mine, I suppose—eh ? ”

“ A nasty, ungrateful, pig-headed, brutish, obstinate, sneaking dog,” exclaimed Mrs. Squeers, taking Smike’s head under her arm, and administering a cuff at every epithet ; “ what does he mean by that ? ”

“ Stand aside, my dear,” replied Squeers. “ We’ll try and find out.”

Mrs. Squeers, being out of breath with her exertions, complied. Squeers caught the boy firmly in his grip; one desperate cut had fallen on his body—he was wincing from the lash and uttering a scream of pain—it was raised again, and again about to fall—when Nicholas Nickleby, suddenly starting up, cried, “Stop!” in a voice that made the rafters ring.

“Who cried stop?” said Squeers, turning savagely round.

“I!” said Nicholas, stepping forward. “This must not go on!”

“Must not go on!” cried Squeers, almost in a shriek.

“No!” thundered Nicholas.

Aghast and stupefied by the boldness of the interference, Squeers released his hold of Smike, and, falling back a pace or two, gazed upon Nicholas with looks that were positively frightful.

“I say, must not,” repeated Nicholas, nothing daunted; “shall not. I will prevent it.”

Squeers continued to gaze upon him, with his eyes starting out of his head; but astonishment had actually for the moment bereft him of speech.

“You have disregarded all my quiet interference in this miserable lad’s behalf,” said Nicholas; “you have returned no answer to the letter in which I begged forgiveness for him, and offered to be responsible that he would remain quietly here. Don’t blame me for this public interference. You have brought it upon yourself; not I.”

“Sit down, beggar!” screamed Squeers, almost beside himself with rage, and seizing Smike as he spoke.

“Wretch,” rejoined Nicholas fiercely, “touch him at your peril! I will not stand by and see it done. My blood is up, and I have the strength of ten such men as you. Look to yourself, for by Heaven I will not spare you, if you drive me on!”

“Stand back,” cried Squeers, brandishing his weapon.

“I have a long series of insults to avenge,” said Nicholas, flushed with passion; “and my indignation is aggravated by the dastardly cruelties practised on helpless infancy in this foul den. Have a care; for if you do raise the devil within me, the consequences shall fall heavily upon your own head!”

He had scarcely spoken, when Squeers, in a violent

outbreak of wrath, and with a cry like the howl of a wild beast, spat upon him, and struck him a blow across the face with his instrument of torture, which raised up a bar of livid flesh as it was inflicted. Smarting with the agony of the blow, and concentrating into that one moment all his feelings of rage, scorn, and indignation, Nicholas sprang upon him, wrested the weapon from his hand, and pinning him by the throat, beat the ruffian till he roared for mercy.

The boys—with the exception of Master Squeers, who, coming to his father's assistance, harassed the enemy in the rear—moved not hand or foot; but Mrs. Squeers, with many shrieks for aid, hung on to the tail of her partner's coat, and endeavoured to drag him from his infuriated adversary; while Miss Squeers, who had been peeping through the keyhole in expectation of a very different scene, darted in at the very beginning of the attack, and after launching a shower of inkstands at the usher's head, beat Nicholas to her heart's content, animating herself at every blow with the recollection of his having refused her proffered love, and thus imparting additional strength to an arm which (as she took after her mother in this respect) was, at no time, one of the weakest.

Nicholas, in the full torrent of his violence, felt the blows no more than if they had been dealt with feathers; but, becoming tired of the noise and uproar, and feeling that his arm grew weak besides, he threw all his remaining strength into half a dozen finishing cuts, and flung Squeers from him with all the force he could muster. The violence of his fall precipitated Mrs. Squeers completely over an adjacent form; and Squeers, striking his head against it in his descent, lay at his full length on the ground, stunned and motionless.

Having brought affairs to this happy termination, and ascertained to his thorough satisfaction that Squeers was only stunned, and not dead (upon which point he had had some unpleasant doubts at first), Nicholas left his family to restore him, and retired to consider what course he had better adopt.



## A NOTE ON DRAMATIZATION

Here is raw material for a good play in two or three scenes, and in class-work its length is an advantage, for when the problems have been discussed, the scenarios written, and the list of characters drawn up, the actual writing can be divided among a number of boys or girls.

The play can combine humour and pathos, but the horror and violence of the original must be toned down, for the realism of the stage would make it intolerably painful. There are many interesting problems involved in selecting, condensing, and arranging the material; if more than one scenario can be followed, and the results tested in rehearsal, it will be a great advantage. A much-appreciated ending to the play can be provided by making the boys support Nicholas and duck Mrs. Squeers in her own brimstone and treacle.

THE END